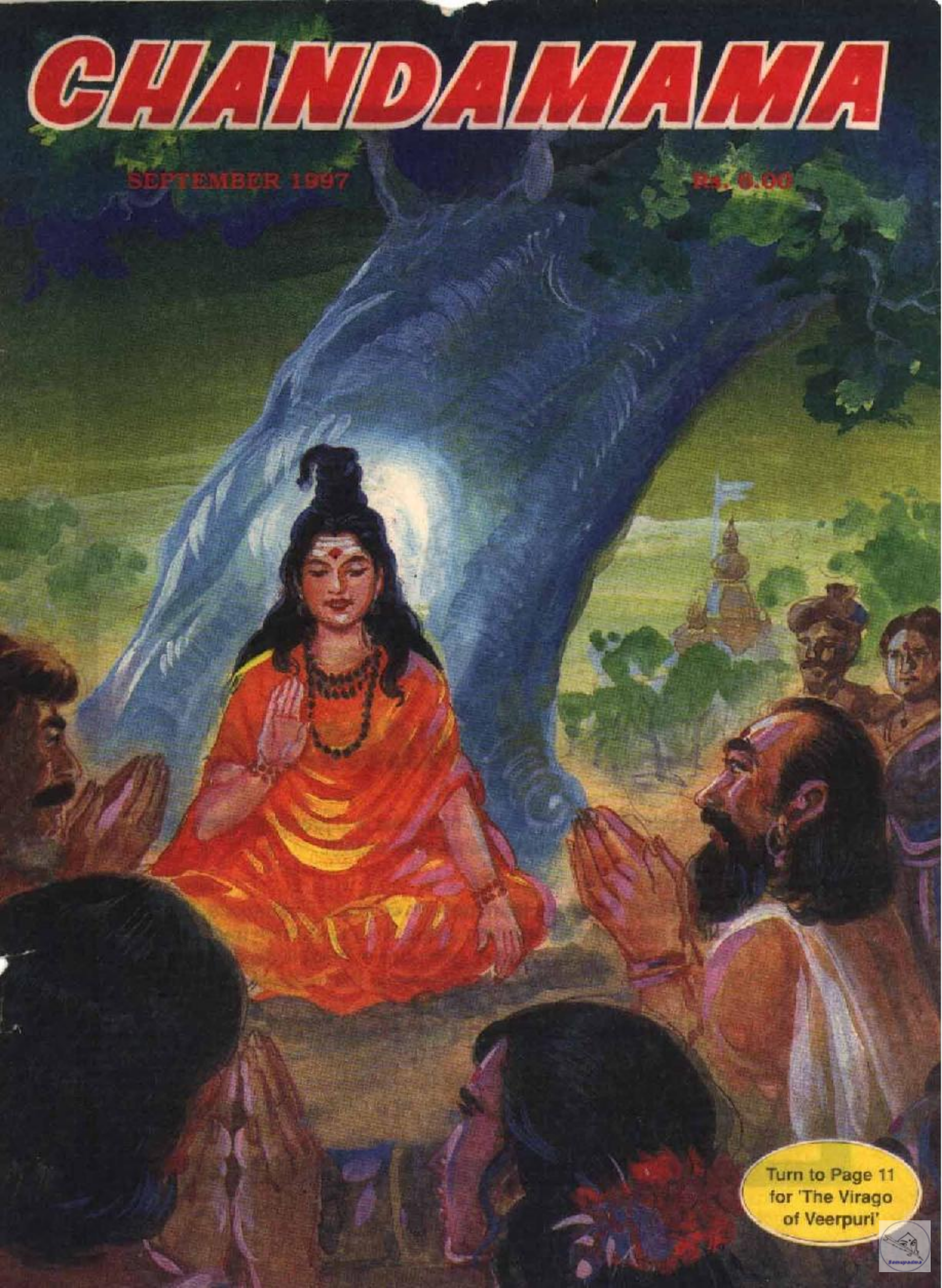


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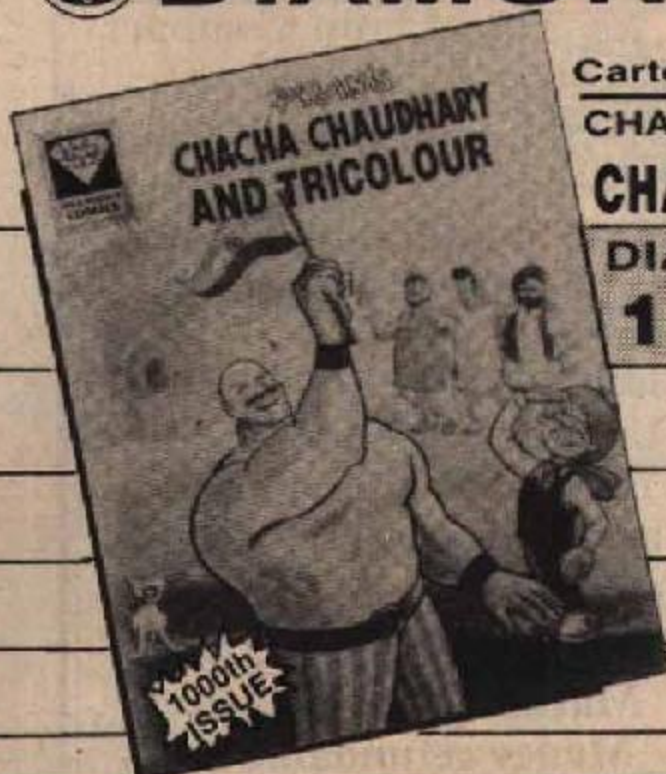
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NEXT ISSUE

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THE SAGA OF 1857 : While the brave young Rani is prepared to face the wrath of the East India Company, and not yield to its irrational demand, the other aggrieved person is a prince—famous as the Nana Sahib. The two now come together in a glorious revolt against the tyrants.

THE VIRAGO OF VEERPURI : The Yuvaraja of Mahendragiri takes advantage of the chance presence of Vajreshwari, the daughter of the army commander of Veerpuri, to settle a score with that kingdom. Raja, who practises wizardry, has metamorphosed her into Vairamukhi who now appears in Veerpuri as a saffron-clad sanyasini, whom people venerate as 'Mata'. She is made to administer poison to the army commander, Marthandvarma. The people of Veerpuri do not know at that moment that they are in for more shocks. Who is fated to be the next victim?

MAHABHARATA : Lord Krishna goes to Hastinapuri on a peace mission. His pleadings to King Dhritarashtra to advise his son Duryodhana to meet the just demands of Pandavas have no effect. His advice to Duryodhana, Karna, and Sakuni fall on deaf ears. Parasurama reveals that the mighty warriors, Nara and Narayana, have been reborn as Arjuna and Krishna and they would be invincible. Sage Kanwa, too, advises Duryodhana to live in amity with the Pandavas. Sage Narada asks him to give up his pride. Duryodhana approaches Krishna with menacing steps. How does the Lord react?

THEY STOOD UP TO THE BRITISH : The serial narrates the story of Veera Pandya Katta Bomman.

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Founder: CHAKRAPANI

Controlling Editor : NAGI REDDI

The Curse of Disunity

The British East India Company came to India in order to trade with the country. They were not the first group of Westerners to do so. The Portuguese, the Dutch, and the French too were here for trade. But the British were extremely ambitious. They desired to subjugate the country and rule it as their Zamindari. In 1765, through some bargain with the Nawab who ruled over the region, the Company established some sort of a Raj or government over Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. This came to be popularly known as the John Company Raj!

For occupying parts of India they took recourse to dishonest means. They ignored the traditions of India and the sentiments of the people. They made allies with the Indian princes, but whenever it suited their own interest, they forgot their allies or even betrayed them.

But should we blame the John Company alone for this situation? They were no doubt naughty, but their mischief would not have succeeded if the Indian princes were united. Unfortunately, the Rajas often quarrelled and fought among themselves. While some among them were genuine patriots, the rest were anxious to snub their neighbours even with the help of the John Company.

But what about the common people of India? Did they accept the British notoriety in silent resignation? No. They did rise in revolt whenever they could.

A WINDOW ON THE WORLD

Exit the Lion Enter the Dragon

Fifty years ago Britain left India, giving it its independence. As we go to press, it is hardly fifty days since Britain ended the 99-year lease of Hong Kong and handed it back to China. In a ceremony marked by "solemn precision and martial music", China resumed sovereignty over Hong Kong at the stroke of midnight of June 30, ending nearly 160 years of colonial rule by Britain. The Union Jack came down and the Red banner of China went up the flagpole. The lion, which is symbolic of British power, gave way to the Chinese dragon.

Hong Kong is one of two hundred tiny islands off the southern tip of the Chinese main land. In 1841, China lost the Opium War to Britain, and the next year, it ceded Hong Kong to Britain in perpetuity. Before two decades had passed, there was another war, and China ceded Kowloon in 1860. In 1898, China gave to Britain what are known as the New Territories on a 99-year lease, which also included the areas ceded earlier. In 1984, the two nations signed a joint declaration, by



which Britain agreed to return Hong Kong, Kowloon, and the New Territories at the end of the lease period. The date set was June 30, 1997.

Meanwhile, Britain had worked wonders with Hong Kong, which was developed into a natural harbour, like Bombay or Singapore. Business flourished, though the growth was hampered during the Second World War (1939-45). After the War, Hong Kong witnessed a meteoric rise in trade and commerce. Hong Kong became a haven for people from other countries to migrate, in search of jobs and for trade.

When people became aware of the impending handover, the question that nagged their mind was: would they continue to enjoy the freedom and prosperity they had under the British rule? In the 1984 declaration, Britain and China agreed on the terms of transfer of power. Some of them are:

The people of Hong Kong will enjoy a large measure of individual freedom. The Special Administrative Region (SAR), as Hong Kong will be called now, will not be subjected to Chinese law. This status will continue for the next fifty years, during which time SAR will be ruled only by the people of Hong Kong; it will have its own Legislative Council, currency, and taxation system. China's supremacy will be evident only in matters of Foreign Affairs and Defence.

At the handing over ceremony, Prince Charles represented the British Crown and China by its President Jian Zemin. Governor Chris Patten formally handed over power to the China-appointed Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa, a 60-year-old shipping magnate, who had had his education in Britain.

On June 30, there was a dazzling fireworks display by Britain; the next day, it was the turn of Chinese pyrotechnics. Ten thousand pigeons, collected from more than thirty provinces of China and specially trained, were released in Hong Kong to symbolise 'home-coming'.

A WAY OF LIFE



The place was called Swapnanagari, but it was no dreamland. It was notorious for corruption. There was not one official who did not dream of getting rich at the expense of the common man. From the top officials to those in the bottom rung were crazy of making easy money. The people suffered at their hands. The spies sent by the king all over the kingdom had only stories of corruption to tell him.

The king was full of sorrow. How could he combat the situation? He sent for the minister. "I don't want to know what you propose to do or how, but you must drive away the devil of corruption from this kingdom within a fortnight. I'm fed up with the reports of corruption that are reaching me every day. There's a limit to all this nonsense. I should not get a simple complaint of corruption after fifteen

days!" said the king sternly.

The minister became active from that moment. He called a meeting of all officials and asked them to take a pledge that they would not demand bribes from that moment onwards. Everybody took the pledge. But they continued their nefarious acts.

Now, the minister was a worried man. His attempt at ending corruption was a total failure. What should he do now? He sat in a corner and began contemplating other stringent measures. His wife noticed the worried look on his face and enquired: "What's bothering you? What happened?"

The minister told her about his meeting with the king and with the officials, and how his orders were being flouted by the officials. "Of the fifteen days time the king had given



me, fourteen have already gone by. Now, there's just one day left? I don't know what I should do or how I would explain to the king."

The woman chuckled. "Oh! That's all? It's very simple! I shall give you a solution to the problem." She then whispered something into his ears.

The minister's face brightened up. "You seem to be very clever!"

The minister acted upon the advice he got from his wife. On the sixteenth day, he sought an audience with the king. The king readily granted the minister's request because he had reasons to do so. When the minister was ushered into his presence, he found the king smiling.

"How did you manage it, *mantriji*? It's nothing short of a wonder. My spies had no reports of corruption when they met me last night. You're great, I say. Let me compliment you on your cleverness. As you have succeeded in driving away the devil of corruption, I've decided to honour

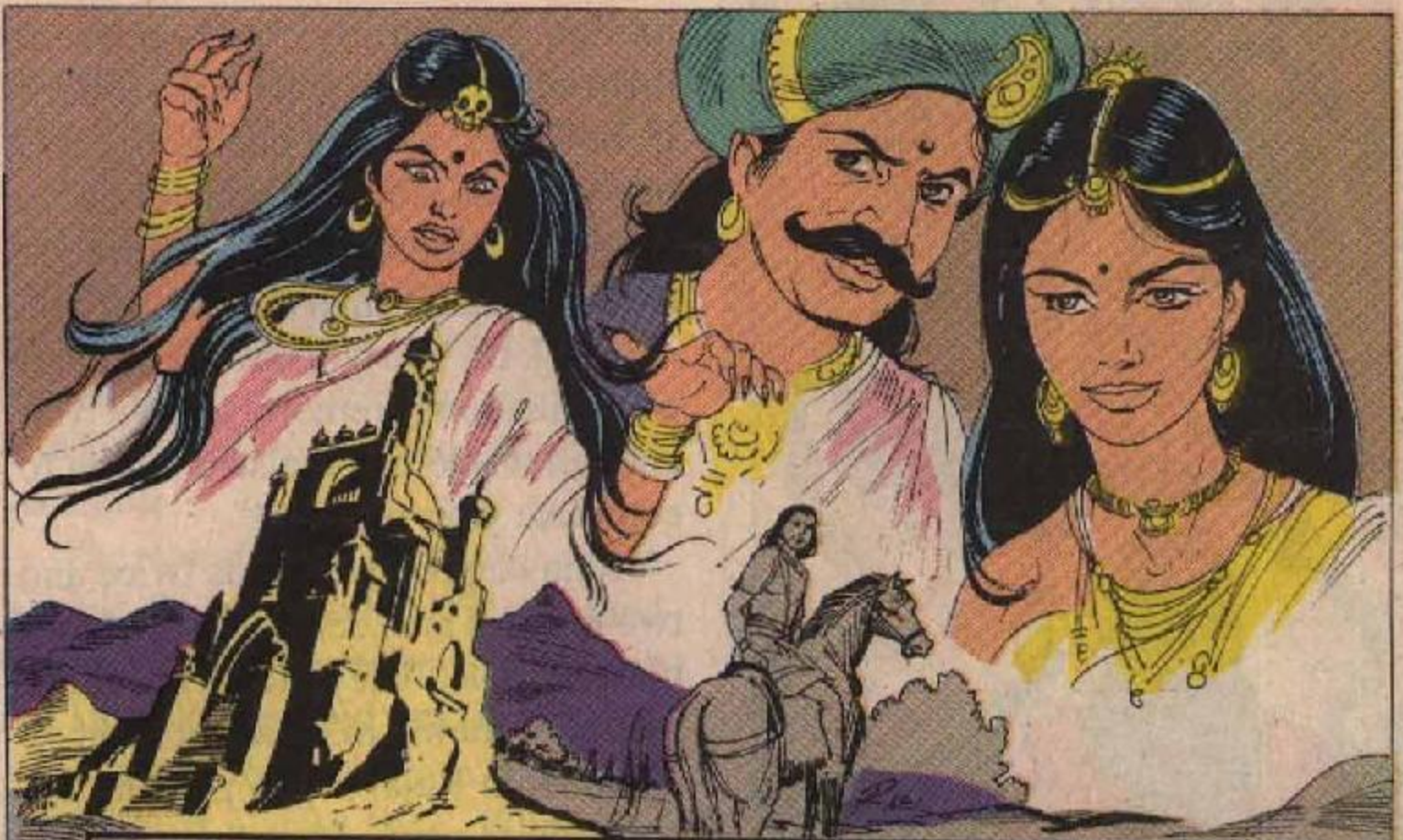
you with the title of Rajaratna."

The minister was very elated. He rushed back home to convey the glad news to his wife. "I've done it! I did exactly as you advised. I got hold of the spies and bribed them into giving good reports to the king! They did that, and the king is very happy. There's no more any complaint of bribery. And the bribe I paid to the spies came from the officials themselves! They collected the money from their subordinates. Ultimately, I get all the name and fame!"

"All that's right, but do you know why officials demand bribes?" responded the woman. "Have you ever thought of that? I can tell you. As long as there is an incompetent ruler in a kingdom, such acts of corruption will thrive! You won't be able to eradicate them. Why, the evil may even spread or increase!"

"You're right," said the minister. "Bribery is a way of life, not only here, but everywhere. How to combat it?"





THE VIRAGO OF VEERPURI

The story so far: Vajreshwari, the daughter of Marthandvarma, army commander of Veerpuri, gets separated from her brother, Vijaykrishna, during a hunting adventure. She enters a cave. Its mouth is suddenly shut. She decides to go forward. As she gropes her way in the dark, her hand is gripped by a male hand. He addresses her as 'princess' and offers to take her to his Raja. He, too, calls her a princess and entrusts her to Mohini and her assistants, Malini and Shalini. The next day, Raja reveals certain secrets of Veerpuri and Mahendragiri where she has reached. The kingdom of Mahendragiri has a score or two to settle with Veerpuri. He tells her that she will be instrumental in bringing justice to Mahendragiri. He also discloses that he is only the Yuvaraja afflicted with a physical disability; his brother, the real raja, is in no mood to rule the kingdom as there was an attempt to poison him. In the course of an eerie ritual, Raja gives her a new name. Vairamukhi now awaits more instructions from Raja.

When Vairamukhi woke up, the two girls helped her to get ready to meet Raja. To them she was now Princess Vairamukhi. It was evident that she had forgotten her real identity, thanks to the wizardry employed by Raja. Soon Mohini came into the room and, like on the previous day, escorted her up to the end of the corridor where a masked attendant took over and led

her to where Raja was waiting for her. It was a different room, but Vairamukhi did not realise the change of the meeting place. There was no idol of goddess Kali. There was, however, a square pit in which had been placed a wooden stool without any velvet cushion. Vairamukhi did not wait for a command from Raja, but went straight and sat on the stool.

4. A SANYASINI AT THE TEMPLE



Raja was in the midst of chanting some *mantras*, this time aloud. Outside the pit, there were something looking like cones at the four corners. From them emitted a perfumed smoke. Around the pit, in a circle, tiny lamps had been lit.

Suddenly, Raja stopped his chanting, and said aloud: "Vairamukhi, are you ready to serve Mahendragiri?"

The girl said, "Yes!"

"Then, listen carefully," Raja said, gravely. "From now on you assume a new role. You'll be taken to Veerpuri where, mind you, you'll be guarded by my men. You won't be able to see them, but they will be watching you all the while. You've only to clap your

hands, and they will present themselves before you to take orders. If, however, you are unable to carry out your mission or you refuse to obey my orders, you'll be brought back here and I shall dispose off you as I think fit. You will now go through a purification ceremony to give you enough wisdom and also strength to complete your mission!"

Raja clapped his hands twice and two masked men came into the room holding pots. They stood on either side of Vairamukhi facing her and on a nod from Raja, began pouring the water on the girl. After the two pots had been emptied on her, Raja nodded again and the two men left the room.

Something very strange had happened. Vairamukhi was surprised beyond belief, because while the pit and its surroundings had traces of water, she herself was not wet! That was not all. She saw that she was now wearing a saffron robe, normally seen on sanyasinis. The dress she had on before coming into the room had disappeared along with her jewels. She now realised that the person calling himself Raja was much more than a magician.

"I don't propose to give you any more instructions right now, Vairamukhi," said Raja. "All that I want you to do for us is very much in your mind. Remember, I hold complete control of your mind and whatever directions you need will be

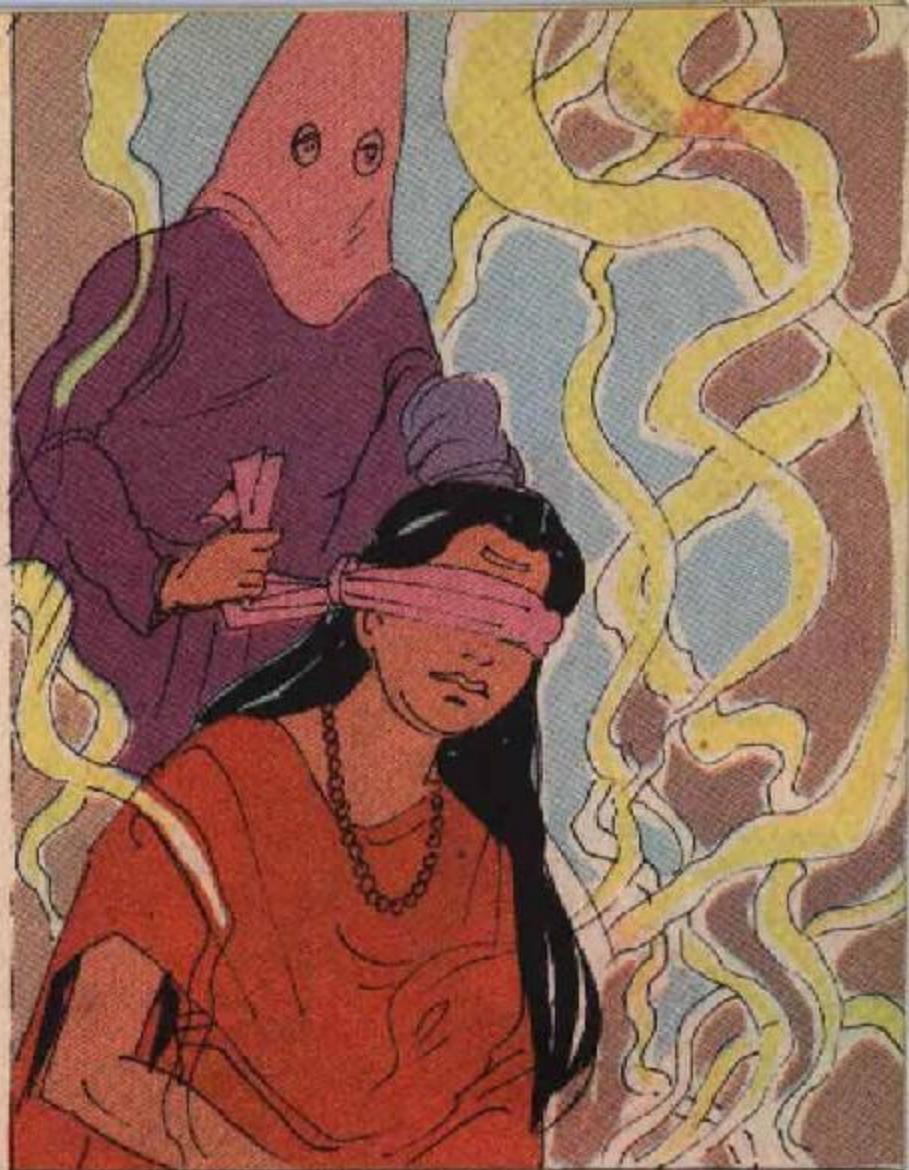
passed on to you without my having to meet you. And whenever I need you, my men will bring you here."

He then clapped his hands once and a masked man stood before him. He seemed to have received his instructions well in advance. Raja turned to Vairamukhi and said: "It's now time to go to Veerpuri. He'll take you there!"

The man stepped forward and with a thick piece of cloth he blindfolded her and helped her to step out of the pit. He held her hand and led her out. Vairamukhi followed him with sure steps but at a slow pace. Whenever they came to a flight of steps, he stopped and held her hand in a firm grip to prevent her from stumbling or falling down. And whenever there was any bend to negotiate, he stopped and touched her shoulder on the left or on the right.

For a long distance, Vairamukhi thought they were walking on marble floor. Then for some distance it was gravel ground. Instinctively, she waved her free hand to find whether she was being taken through a tunnel or a cave. She could not touch any wall. The air was still and she could not hear even a bird's chirp.

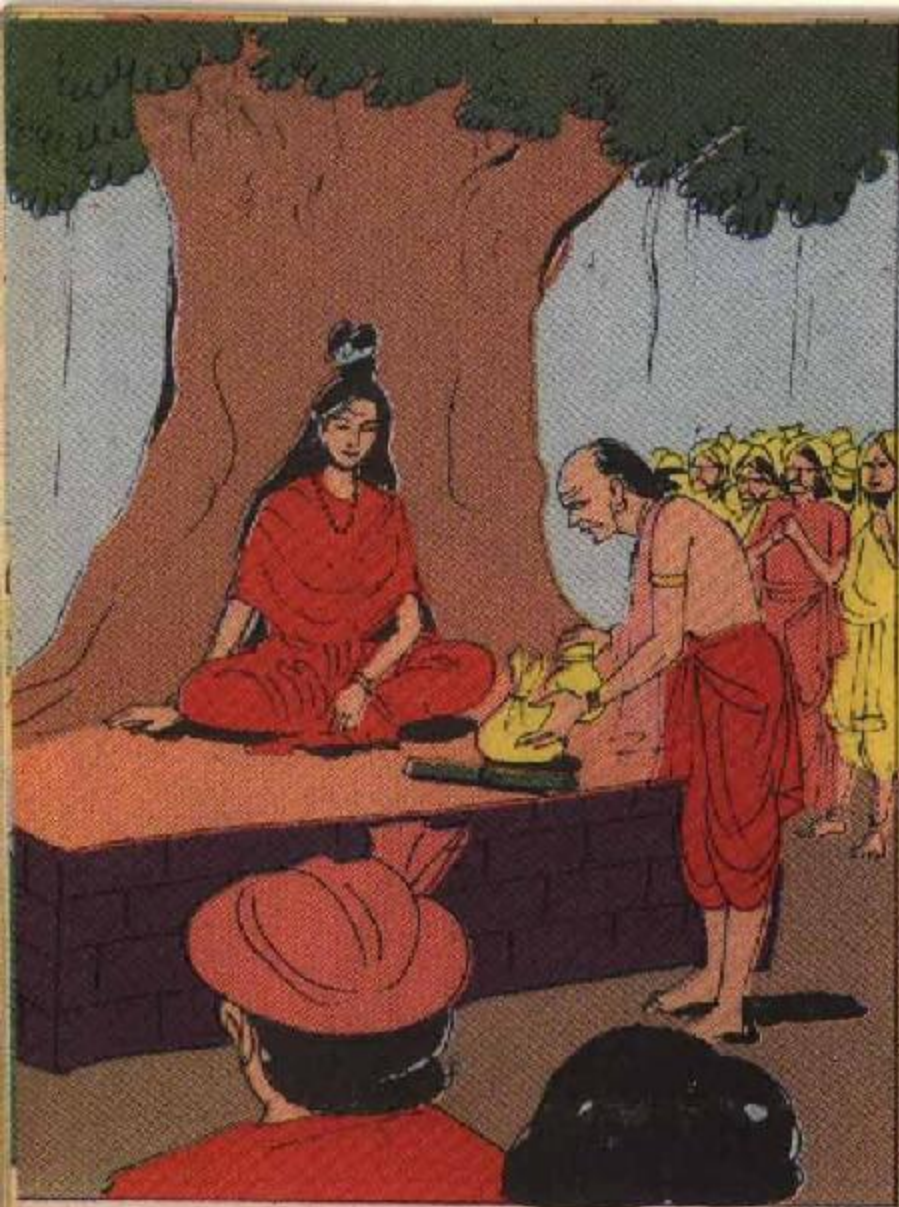
All through their long walk, her escort did not utter a single word, nor did Vairamukhi ask any questions, as she was blindfolded and could not see anything around or did not know where exactly she was being taken to.



He tapped her on the shoulders to indicate that she should stop. He also removed the blindfold and it took some time for Vairamukhi to adjust her eyes to the twilight to which she was now exposed. She was standing in front of a modest hut. The man knocked on the door and a middle-aged woman opened the door. "Come in, princess!" she said. "I'm Ragini. I shall look after you while you're here." She too was wearing a saffron-coloured sari.

Vairamukhi was feeling tired and wished to take rest. By now it was dusk, and she would not be expected to do anything at that hour. Meanwhile, the masked escort had disappeared from the scene.





The next morning, Vairamukhi and Ragini went to a nearby temple and worshipped goddess Kali. Afterwards she was led to the banyan tree in the temple complex where she sat on the platform, assuming a meditative post. In a low voice, Ragini told her: "You may remain here till I come and fetch you, princess. Please don't move away. Your food will come from the temple. Raja will give you all instructions."

Vairamukhi nodded her head, as if she had been advised as to how she should conduct herself. Some of the devotees returning from the temple saw her and crowded around her.

"A sanyasini! Where has she come from?" one of them wondered.

"Yes, we've never seen her here

before. Look at her face. She has such a serene look!" remarked another.

"Let me go and ask her," said a woman in the crowd, and pushed her way to get near Vairamukhi. "Mata! Where have you come from? Why have you taken to sanyas so early in life?"

Vairamukhi did not answer her, nor did she open her eyes. She continued her meditation. Some devotees went away after waiting for some time. Others stayed back hoping that she might address them and speak to them individually. After the temple was closed, the priest came with some food on a *thali*, which he placed in front of her. "Mata! I've brought your food."

Vairamukhi then opened her eyes and smiled at him to acknowledge his hospitality. She closed her eyes again.

"Don't disturb Mata!" the priest advised the gathering. "She'll rest now, and probably she may speak to you in the evening."

The crowd began to melt. One person stopped the priest. "Where has she come from?" he asked him.

"I was told that she is from Mahendragiri, and she will be with us for a few days," replied the priest.

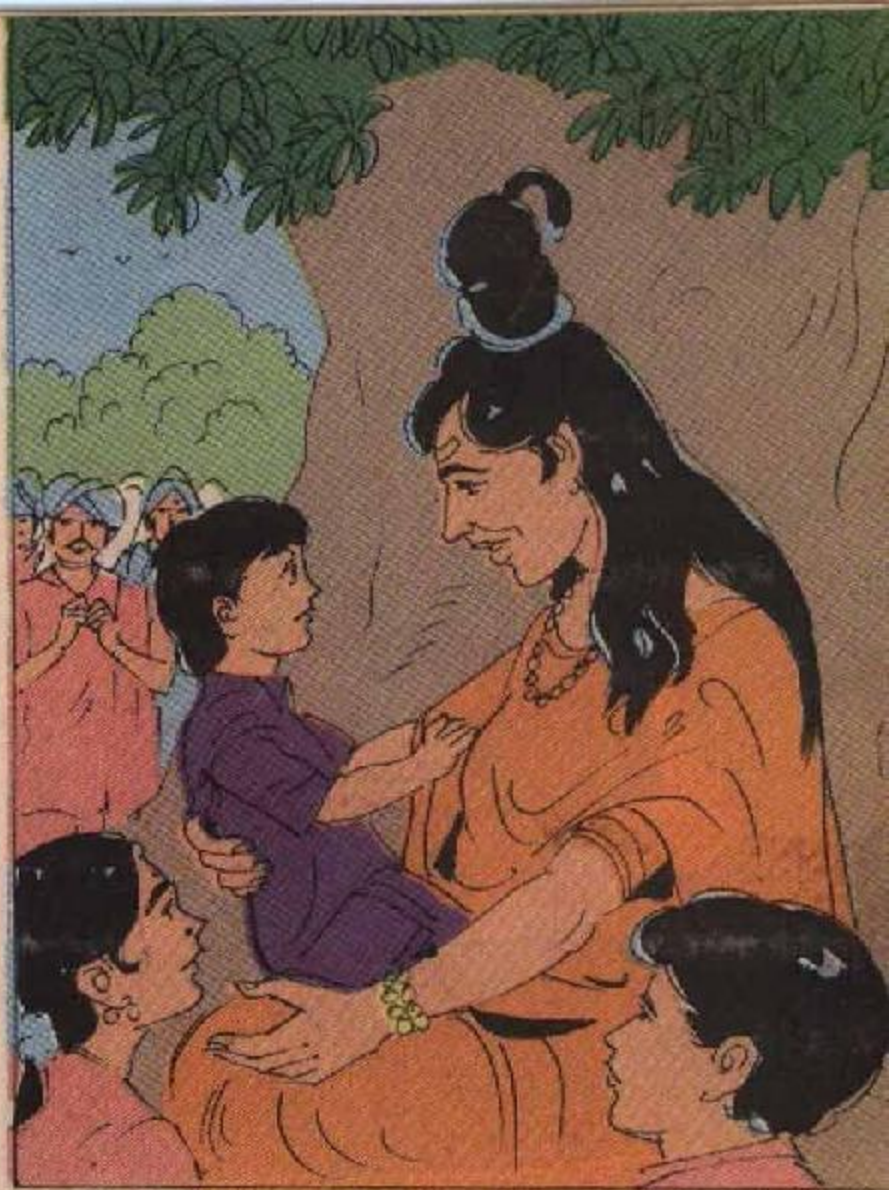
After partaking of the food brought by the priest, Vairamukhi lay down beneath the tree for some time, wondering what instructions would come from Raja, when, and how. When evening came, she sat up and

went into meditation. It was not yet time for devotees to visit the temple.

"Vairamukhi, listen carefully!" A voice was heard. She looked around. She could not see anyone. She looked up at the tree. No, there was no one. The voice was that of Raja, she was sure of that. Didn't he tell her that he had a physical handicap? How then could he travel to Veerpuri? But, he was more than a magician, and he must have some mysterious powers to talk to her.

"Vairamukhi! You'll attract crowds. Talk to the people, get to know their problems. They'll repose their confidence in you, and will never come to suspect you or doubt your real mission. It may be one or two days before I can give you clearer directions, but wait for them. Keep a watch for Marthandvarma. He is agitated because his daughter is missing. He may come to you for advice. Of course, you don't know anything about the girl." The voice trailed off.

Just as she had been told, devotees flocked to her late in the evening. She listened to their woes, pleas, entreaties, but avoided giving them any clue to her identity. For that matter, she was not sure who exactly she was, except that she was a sanyasini, and her name could be Vairamukhi. She took care to fondle the babies taken to her for her blessings and caressed the children who tried to climb up to her

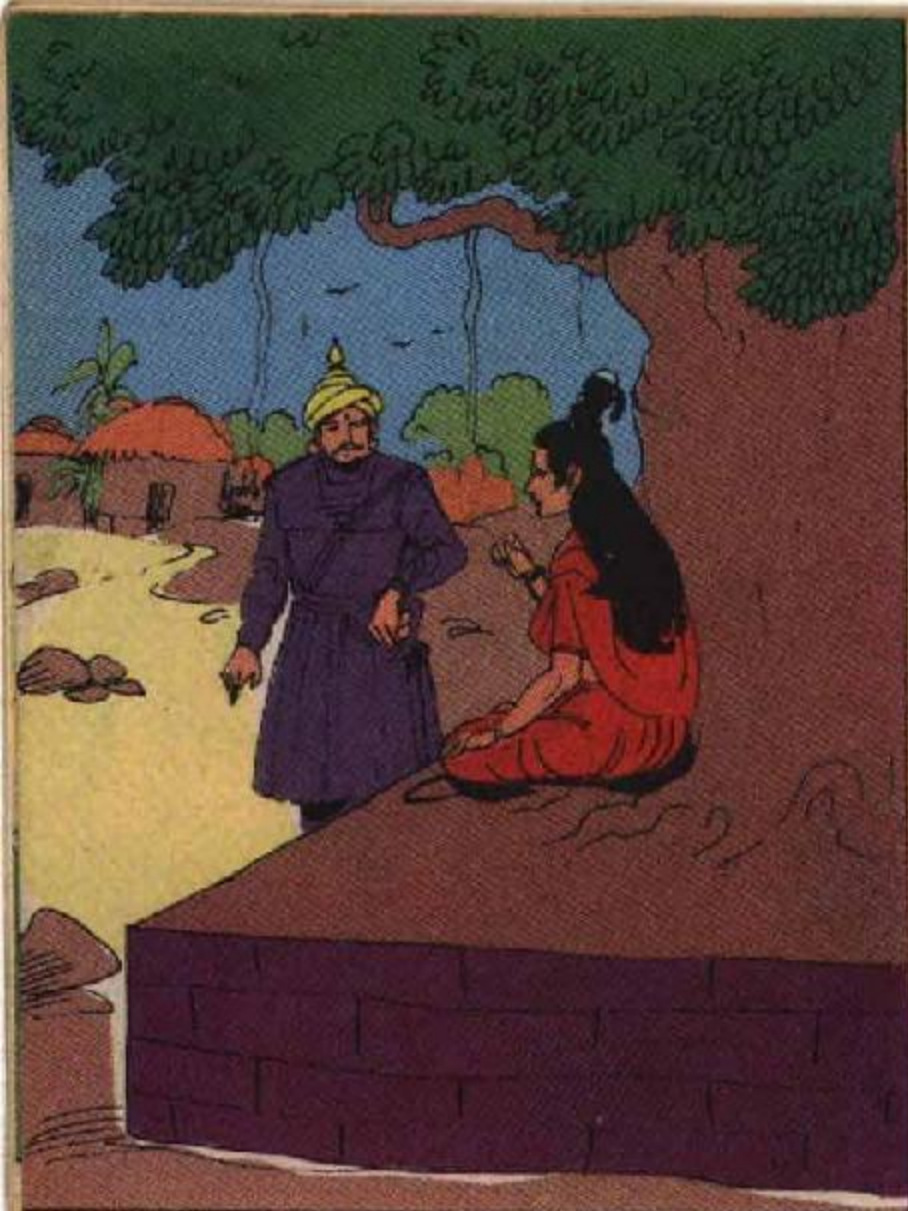


lap. The people did not bother her much that day, thinking she would address them when she became familiar with the place and its people. Ragini came to take her back to the hut.

Vairamukhi was not surprised when a dignitary came to call on her on the third morning. He was accompanied by some soldiers whom he despatched as soon as he reached her presence. He stood among the devotees. Some of them recognised the army commander and made way for him to approach the sanyasini.

"Mata! I'm a worried man and I've come to you with the hope that you'll give me solace and a solution. My daughter Vajreswari has been missing





for a few days. I don't know where she has disappeared and how she is!" he said most pitifully.

Vairamukhi gave out a benign smile and went into meditation. When she opened her eyes, she merely said, "Not today, but tomorrow."

Marthandvarma paid his obeisance to her and left the place, enhancing the reverence the devotees by now had for 'Mata'. They did not feel disappointed that she had till then only spoken to them in monosyllables.

Vairamukhi was thinking of Marthandvarma's visit while she rested. As Raja seemed to have anticipated such an event, she was almost certain that she would get advice from him how she would solve

the army commander's problem.

"I told you Marthandvarma would call on you, didn't I?" That was Raja's voice again. "When he comes tomorrow, you tell him that his daughter is alive and is very much in Veerpuri. He will be overjoyed when he hears that. He will want to know more about her welfare, but would prefer to have a private meeting with you at night. You may accept his invitation and go in the vehicle he sends for you. You'll be given a phial of poison. Take it with you and administer it in his drink. Remember, Marthandvarma is Enemy number one of Mahendragiri. He had tried to poison our king. Therefore, he should not live!" The voice trailed off.

Vairamukhi was excited on receiving these instructions. She went about her meeting with the devotees as if nothing had happened. She was back at the banyan tree the next morning after she and Ragini had had their daily worship at the Kali temple. Vairamukhi was now ready to meet Marthandvarma.

The army commander arrived deliberately late, as he did not want a crowd around him during his meeting with Mata. However, a small crowd was present. Though Vairamukhi had seen him at the back of the crowd, she took her own time listening to every one of them and sending them away with a word or two in reply.

At last Marthandavarma was alone



with Mata. "Do you have any message for me, O venerable lady?" he asked her, carefully choosing his words which were full of anxiety.

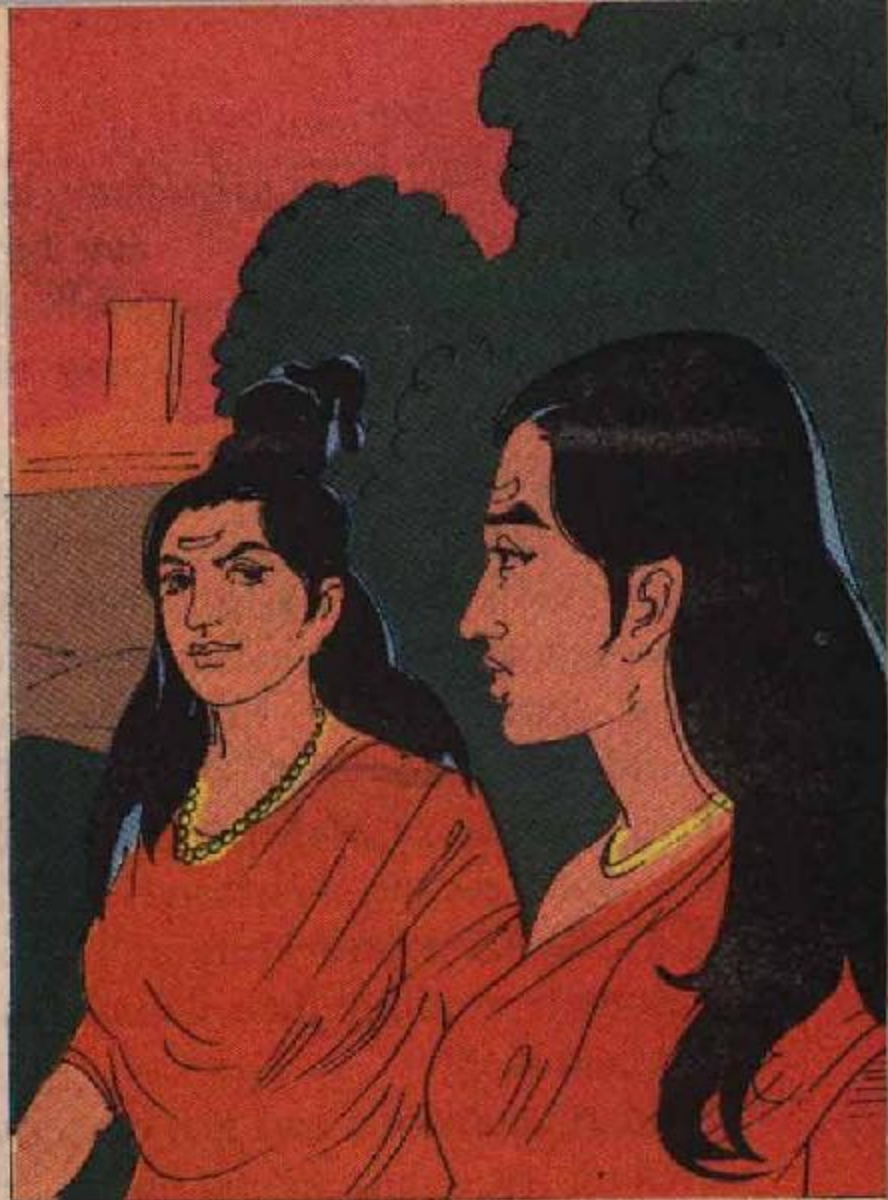
"Yes, your daughter is alive and is very much here," was the cryptic reply Vairamukhi gave.

"Here? Where?" The army commander could not suppress his curiosity. To which Vairamukhi merely smiled. Marthandavarma bowed low and departed.

While she was resting in the afternoon, she heard Raja's voice, this time almost in a whisper : "Marthandvarma will send you a carriage. Go! My men will guard you. Remember the phial." Then there was a mild laughter. "One enemy is accounted for!"

Before dusk fell, Ragini came to fetch Vairamukhi. A little later, a horse-drawn carriage stopped in front of the hut. As the driver was about to knock on the door, it was opened by Ragini, who was seen holding Vairamukhi by her waist. Before she got into the vehicle, a small phial was pressed into her hand, and Vairamukhi kept it safe within the folds of her robe.

The carriage entered the gate of a palatial building where the commander stayed. It did not stop at the portico, but went round to a side. Marthandvarma was waiting for 'Mata' on the verandah and took her inside. She was shown a chair, but



Vairamukhi preferred an unholstered stool.

"Mata! You can end my anxiety by telling me where my daughter is, if as you say she is alive. I shall be ever grateful."

"Didn't I say *here*?" was Vairamukhi's rejoinder.

"Have you ever seen her?" said Marthandvarma, and added without waiting for an answer, "No, let me show you her portrait." He then left the room to bring a portrait himself, instead of asking any of his servants to fetch it.

When Marthandvarma came back—he found Mata sitting on the floor cross-legged and in meditation. He waited for her to open her eyes—but



impatiently. As he sat in his chair, he leaned to take the glass of water that had been left on a side table along with a similar glass and a tray of fruits. He drank the water.

The next moment, he lay sprawling on the floor gasping for breath. Vairamukhi stood up. She had let loose her hair and her eyes seemed to spout sparks of fire. "Your poison could not take away the life of Vinaychandra of Mahendragiri. But *you* won't escape, Marthandvarma! You're the *first* to go in Veerpuri. There are others awaiting their doom! Do you hear me?"

Marthandvarma had just enough strength left in him to nod his head. The next moment he lay dead.

Vairamukhi came out of the room and walked along the verandah. "Follow me, princess!" she turned around and saw a masked man. She quietly followed him. Soon they were in front of the hut. He gave a soft knock on the door and it was opened.

Ragini took one look at Vairamukhi and knew that she had succeeded in her mission. They smiled at each other.

Meanwhile, the carriage driver went in to peep whether the sanyasini he had brought was still with the commander. He did not see the body lying on the floor. He saw the glass of water and drank the contents before he went in search of his master and his guest. He fell down in a thud.

As he alone had known of the presence of the sanyasini in the building, there was none to tell anyone how the two had met with their end. Veerpuri grieved over the sudden death of its army chief. Probably, Marthandvarma could not bear the loss of his daughter any more, thought King Soorasen and the rest of the people in the kingdom.

The few devotees who visited the temple of Kali the next morning could see Mata sitting in meditation. They were struck by the serene look on a glowing face.

-To continue



THE SANNYASI-FAKIR REBELLION

STORY : MIRA UGRA ♦ PICTURES : GOUTAM SEN

A GROUP OF SANNYASIS CALLED GOSAINS AND GIRIS FORMED MILITANT BANDS AROUND THE END OF THE 17TH CENTURY. WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME THEY BECAME MERCENARY AND FOUGHT BATTLES ON BEHALF OF RULERS OF PRINCELY STATES. WITH THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE AND SUBSEQUENT BREAK DOWN OF LAW AND ORDER THEY TURNED CRUSADERS. THEY ROBBED THE RICH BUT HELPED THE POOR FIGHT INJUSTICE AND EXPLOITATION

THE FAKIRS ENJOYED A FOLLOWING BOTH AMONG MUSLIMS AND HINDUS. IN THE BEGINNING THEY PREACHED TOLERANCE BUT LATER THEY BECAME MORE MILITANT AND BEGAN TO ADVOCATE FORCE AND VIOLENCE TO COUNTER CRUELTY AND INJUSTICE.

THE SANNYASIS AND THE FAKIRS ENCOUNTERED THE FORCES OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY IN BIHAR AND BENGAL IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

IN THE BATTLE OF BUXAR ON OCTOBER 22, 1764, GOSAIN HIMMAT GIRI JOINED MIR QASIM AND FOUGHT THE ARMY OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY. WHEN THE BATTLE WAS LOST -



WE WILL NOT GIVE UP! I'LL TEACH THE POOREST OF THE POOR TO FIGHT!

THE SANNYASIS RAIDED THE FACTORIES OF THE COMPANY AND CARRIED OFF THEIR ARMS, AMMUNITION AND SUPPLIES.

THE BRITISH WERE AT THEIR WITS' END...

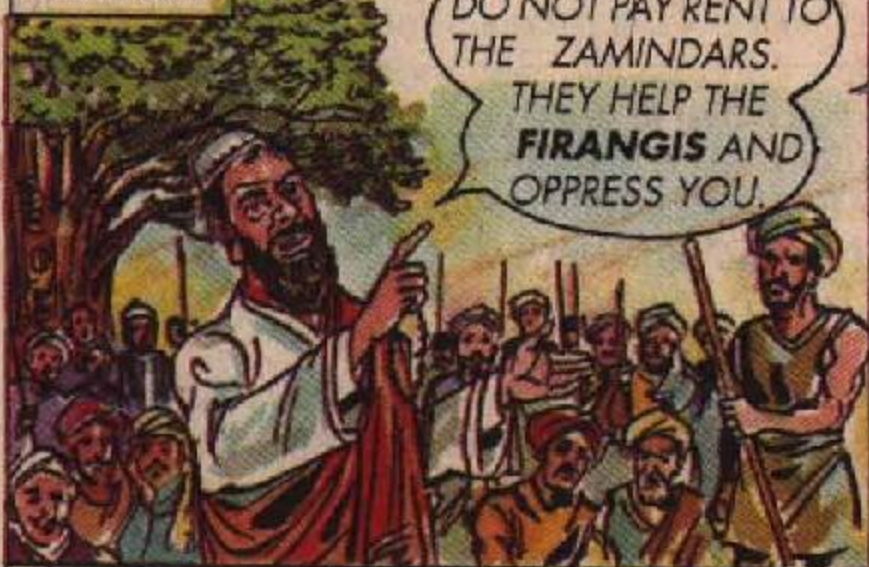
WE WERE OUT-NUMBERED, SIR. FIFTY THOUSAND MADMEN RUSHED AT US.



IN THE 1770'S MAJNUN SHAH, A FAKIR, ACQUIRED POWER IN PARTS OF NORTHERN BENGAL.

AFTER MAJNUN SHAH WAS KILLED IN AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE BRITISH...

DO NOT PAY RENT TO THE ZAMINDARS. THEY HELP THE **FIRANGIS** AND OPPRESS YOU.



...HIS SON, CHIRAGH ALI, CONTINUED HIS MISSION. HE WAS ASSISTED BY BHAWANI PATHAK AND DEBI CHOUDHURANI, BOTH OF WHOM BECAME LEGENDARY FIGURES IN THEIR LIFETIME.



THEY RAIDED THE RICH ZAMINDARS. ONE DAY -

SURRENDER YOUR WEALTH!

AND DON'T RUN CRYING TO YOUR WHITE MASTERS!



SOLDIERS ARE COMING!

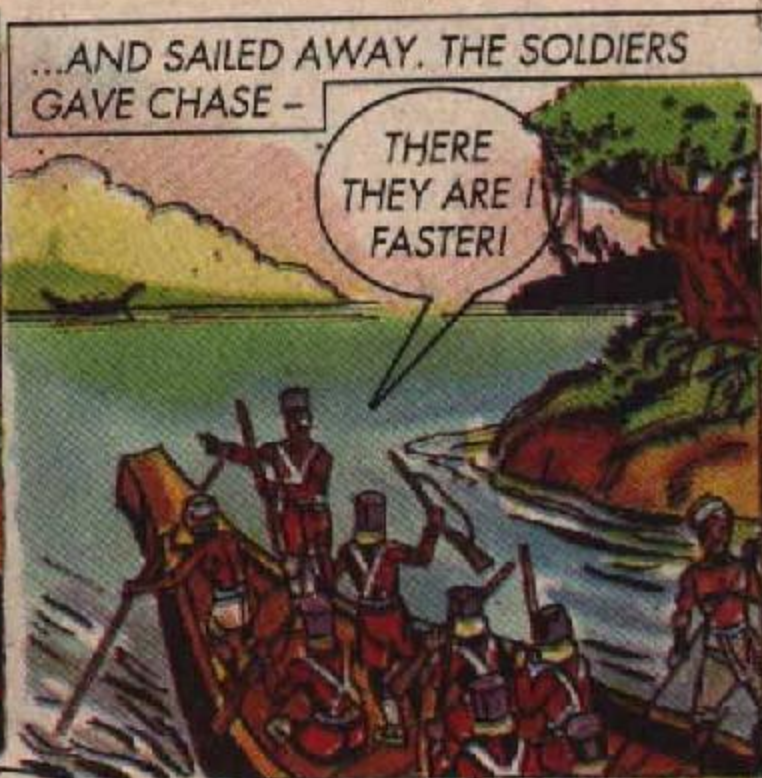


THERE WAS A BOAT
WAITING FOR THEM.
THEY QUICKLY GOT
INTO IT...



...AND SAILED AWAY. THE SOLDIERS
GAVE CHASE -

THERE
THEY ARE!
FASTER!



BUT -

THEY HAVE
DISAPPEARED!

WE'D BETTER
TURN BACK!



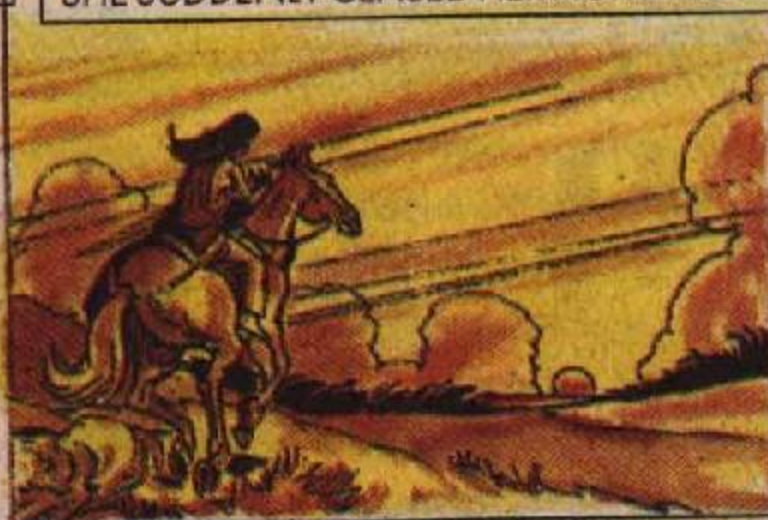
IT WAS THE CLOSEST THEY
HAD COME TO BEING
CAUGHT.

IN 1788 BHAWANI PATHAK WAS
CAUGHT WITH SOME OF HIS MEN AND
WAS PUT TO DEATH.

NOW....DEBI
CHOUDHURANI
NEXT!



DEBI CHOUDHURANI CONTINUED HER
MISSION FOR SOME MORE TIME, THEN
SHE SUDDENLY CEASED HER ACTIVITIES....



...AND DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE.
NO ONE KNOWS WHAT BECAME OF HER.

BUT THE MOVEMENT LIVED ON. IN SUSANG PARGANA, KARAM SHAH, A FAKIR, DREW HUGE CROWDS WITH HIS SERMONS.

HINDUS, MUSSALMANS, GARO AND KHASI – WE'RE ALL BROTHERS AND EQUALS. NO ONE HAS A RIGHT TO ENSLAVE OTHERS.



HIS ORGANISATION WAS CALLED THE **PAGAL PANTHIS**. AFTER KARAM SHAH'S DEATH IN 1813, HIS SON TIPU SHAH LED THE SECT.

DEATH TO THE ZAMINDARS AND **FIRANGIS!**



IN 1825, THE **PAGAL PANTHIS** CAPTURED GAR JARIPA IN SHERPUR ZAMINDARI AND ESTABLISHED THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT WHICH LASTED TWO YEARS.

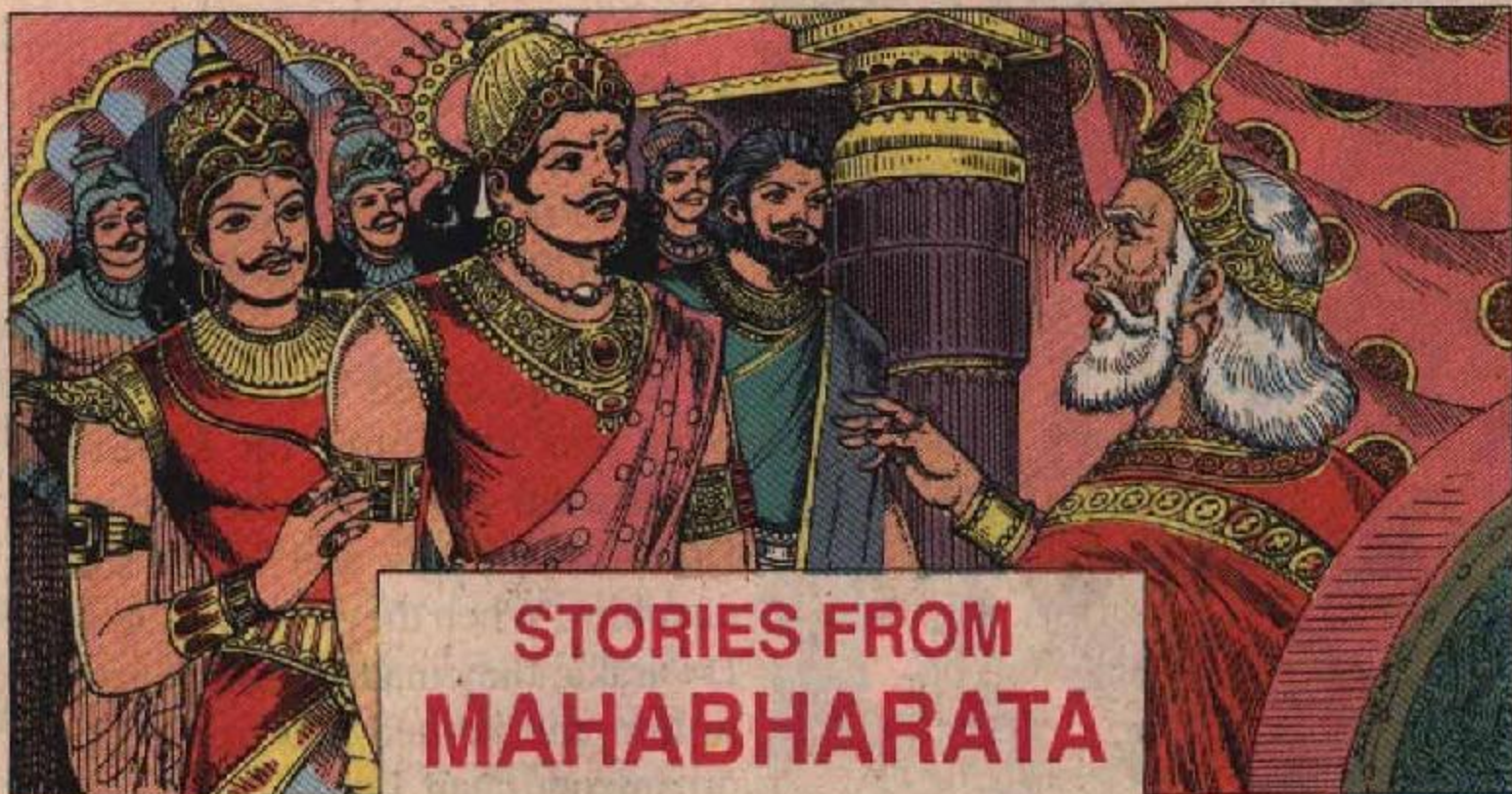
OUR ELDERS ARE FAR MORE JUST THAN THE COMPANY SIRCAR.



IN 1826, A HUGE BRITISH CONTINGENT CAME TO JAMALPUR...AND SCoured THE VILLAGES AND FORESTS FOR TIPU SHAH AND FINALLY CAUGHT HIM IN 1827. TIPU SHAH WAS SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT.

THE BRITISH CAME DOWN HEAVILY ON THE FAKIRS AND SANNYASIS AND THEY WERE BANNED FROM TRAVERSING NORTHERN INDIA IN BANDS. IT WAS THE SANNYASI REBELLION THAT INSPIRED BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJI TO WRITE THE NOVEL **ANANDA MATH** IN WHICH HE LATER INCLUDED THE SONG **VANDE MATARAM**.





STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

The story so far: When Duryodhana did not respond favourably to his father's entreaties, the assembled kings knew that war was unavoidable. On Dhritarashtra's request, Sanjay described the strength of the Pandavas and said his son could never defeat them as Lord Krishna and Arjuna were together. Impressed by Sanjay's observations, Dhritarashtra felt that Duryodhana should make peace with them. Yudhishtira spoke to Lord Krishna about the attempts made by them to make peace. But Duryodhana had refused to give them at least five villages, if not the entire property. Lord Krishna expressed his own doubts about the possibility of peace, but said he would attempt to bring the Kauravas around. Bhima too wanted peace so that the entire race might be saved from destruction. When Arjuna doubted whether the Kauravas would appreciate his peace efforts, Lord Krishna said as long as Sekuni and Karna advised Duryodhana, he would never see reason. Satyaki supported Sahadeva's contention that preparations must be made for war. Draupadi said revenge must be taken against Duryodhana and Duhshasana. Sensing Duryodhana's cruel moves, Krishna sped to Vrihasthala.

When Dhritarashtra heard about Lord Krishna's impending arrival in Hastinapura, he called Bhishma, Drona, Vidura, Sanjaya, and Duryodhana and said: "Lord Krishna is coming to see us. Make sure that proper hospitality is extended to him all along the route of his journey, once he enters our domain."

So the route from Hastinapura to

Vrihasthala was gaily decorated and colourful banners were hung. Cosy shelters were erected by the roadside. But Lord Krishna drove straight on to Hastinapura, where he was warmly received by Bhishma, Drona, Duryodhana, and a host of dignitaries.

Lord Krishna went to the royal court and was accorded a grand welcome by the peers who stood up to



show their high regard for him. Dhritarashtra requested him to sit on the golden throne. The Lord of Dwaraka then exchanged greetings with everyone and afterwards went to Vidura's palace where he met Kuntidevi. She spoke eagerly to Krishna.

"How my sons must have suffered in their exile in the forest! Fate has so decreed that I should tarry here in the midst of royal splendour, while my children roamed about through dangers and misery! How are they - Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva? I know that Yudhishtira can take care of himself. Poor Draupadi! How much she must have suffered! Marriage to the Pandavas has not brought any happiness to her!"

Kuntidevi began to weep. Lord Krishna consoled her with sweet words. "Don't worry. No harm has come to them. Soon they'll be here and you'll be able to rejoice in their company."

Later he called on Duryodhana, who was reclining on a throne resplendent with the finest of jewels. Duhsasana, Karna, and Sakuni stood near him. When they saw the Lord of Dwaraka, they made their obeisance to him and invited him to sit on an ornamental chair. Lord Krishna spoke to them gently and at the end of the day took his leave. Thus he visited in turn all the Kaurava kinsmen and finally returned to Vidura's palace.

At night Lord Krishna attended the lavish banquet thrown in his honour by Vidura. Said Vidura: "Krishna, I'm not sure if much good will flow from your visit to Hastinapura. After all, what can you expect from Duryodhana? He's constantly thinking of war. How can we ever talk of peace? Karna keeps dinning into the ears of Duryodhana that he can rout the Pandavas, all by himself. Of course, Duryodhana has gathered round him a mighty army. Probably the Kaurava army is superior in number to the Pandava forces. Therefore, it is not surprising that he thinks he is invincible. Many kings have come from afar to lend their support to him. I wish you did not go to the court to talk of peace. I do not

doubt your persuasive powers, but it makes me unhappy to see you pit your wits against such wicked men."

Lord Krishna smiled benignly. "True well-wishers speak only what is sensible. Although I know that my words will be unwelcome, at least I must try my best to bring about peace. Why should there be needless massacres on both sides? For fear that people will accuse me of not trying to stop this bloodshed, I've come here to talk of peace. Moreover, I'm not afraid of speaking out in the court. Peace efforts must be continued, though ultimately all will depend on Duryodhana's attitude."

Next day, while Krishna was getting ready to set out on his mission, Duryodhana and Sakuni arrived to take him to the royal court where Dhritarashtra was awaiting him.

Lord Krishna got into the chariot driven by Daruka and sped towards the court where he was most cordially received. Entering the court, he took his seat near Vidura, while Duryodhana and Karna were seated away from him. Everyone was eager to hear what Lord Krishna had to say.

Then he addressed Dhritarashtra. "O King! I have come here to bring about peace between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The race of Kuru is ancient and honourable. Your ancestors are renowned for their sagacity and wisdom. Now you're the elder statesman of that race. All must listen



to you and act accordingly. Your sons are guilty of grave misdeeds. You must be aware of that. If they continue to act as irresponsible as they have been doing, then the entire Kaurava race must accept the blame for that. Therefore, advise them well and stop this war which, if allowed to begin, may ultimately destroy this world."

Lord Krishna paused and looked at the eager assembly around him that was listening to his words with rapt attention. "Dhritarashtra! After all, who are the Pandavas? They are the children of your own brother. They are brothers of the Kauravas. If their just demands are not met, terrible consequences will follow. The responsibility for that rests with this court. Therefore, think well,



and decide what it is going to be—War or Peace!"

Lord Krishna stopped speaking and a deep silence reigned throughout the court. No one ventured to express an opinion. Then Parasurama got up. "O King! Let me relate a short tale. If you can follow the moral in that story, you'll benefit immensely.

"Long ago, there was a king called Dambothbhavan. He went about challenging all and sundry to defeat him in combat. Then some Brahmins said, 'O King, you should not boast like that. Don't you know that pride goeth before a fall?'

"But all this fell on deaf ears and the king did not stop his boasting.

"So they said, 'Very well. Go and challenge Nara and Narayana. They are mighty warriors and have vanquished all those who dared to oppose them. Now they are deep in meditation on mount Gandhamadana. Go and fight them.'

"So the king took his army along and challenged Nara and Narayana.

The latter advised the king not to resort to war but to allow them to meditate in peace. But the king was adamant and aggressive and at last, exhausted of patience, Nara took a blade of Kusa grass and chanting some spells over it, threw it at the army of the king. At once the army was vanquished. Thereupon Dambothbhavan fell at Nara's feet and humbly beseeched his pardon. Nara pardoned him and said, 'O foolish king, give up your vanity. Go and rule over your people wisely.' "

Parasurama ended this tale of Dambothbhavan and said, "O King! Nara was immensely powerful and Narayana was a hundred times stronger. Those two, Nara and Narayana, have been reborn as Arjuna and Krishna. Therefore, accept peace before Arjuna strings an arrow to his bow. On the battlefield, none can vanquish Arjuna and Krishna. Therefore, give up all thoughts of war and make peace with the Pandavas."

— To continue





THE LIVING ART OF MIRZAPUR

In Mirzapur one cannot miss a carpet, be it on a cycle, tonga, motor cycle, jeep and sometimes even on camels. The art of carpet weaving is the soul of Mirzapur. This art is said to have evolved with the ancient Egyptians.



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Today the majority of the hand-knotted carpets are made in an area south of the river Ganga known as the "Mirzapur-Bhadoli" belt. Unlike in Kashmir, Mirzapur carpets are conceived at the hands of a designer who makes a graph or *naksha* of an original Persian design.

A strange system of classification is followed, where a carpet is called a 7/52 or a 9/60. To understand this in terms of knots per square inch, the two figures should be multiplied and the result divided by four. Indo-Persian designs, roughly of a 9/60 quality, range in price from Rs. 700 to Rs. 900 per square metre.

Indian carpets first attracted world attention through the great London Exhibition of 1851. The principal markets for export are Germany, England, America, and Australia.

—Shital

Jahnu

The king who became a hermit

Jahnu was a kind king and a good ruler. His subjects led a contented life. The king often rode through the happy villages and observed the people busy in the fields or enjoying themselves singing songs or feasting.

One day, while walking along the river-bank, the king observed the water flowing without a pause. Time also flowed like that. How best to make use of time? he wondered.

He knew that the best use a king could put time to was to ensure the safety and happiness of his subjects. Well, his subjects were a happy lot, the kings of the neighbouring states were good, and there was no threat either to his kingdom or to his subjects. He therefore decided that the best way to use his time would be to meditate and to perform Yoga.

He put his son, Balakasva, on the throne and retired to a spot somewhere

in Haridwar and was engrossed in Yoga. So very sincere and intense was his practice of Yoga that he achieved great powers within a short time.

He had a hut at the foot of a hill. One day, while he stood on the hill, he saw a mighty flow of water emerging from the northern mountains. Soon the flow submerged his hut and began washing it away.

Legend says that he drank up the water immediately. But it was the flow of the sacred Ganga which Prince Bhagiratha had brought down from the heavens. His grandsires had been reduced to a heap of ashes by a hermit's curse. They were to be restored to life only when the Ganga flowed on the ashes.

The noble and brave prince explained the situation to the sage. The compassionate Jahnu released the water through his ear. Ganga came to be known as Jahnavi, after the sage's name.



DO YOU KNOW?

THE TALL TOWER



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The Ostankino tower in Greater Moscow, stretching up to a height of 423 metres, is the tallest self-supporting tower in the world. Designed by the architect N.V. Nikitin, the tower is constructed of concrete and weighs a staggering 55,000 tonnes. Visitors to the tower are allowed to ascend up to a height of 500 metres with the help of any of seven lifts. The lifts themselves ascend to a height of 474 metres travelling at a speed of seven metres per second. The tower also houses a hotel at a height of 337 metres. On top of the tower is a cylinder, resembling a telescope, on which high frequency band aerials are arranged. This part of the tower attracts lightning and the aerials record their power.

The tower actually bends up to 5 metres with the wind. The top of the tower also expands due to heat from the sun. Experts have calculated that at a temperature of 20°C the tower's height actually stretches to 540m 74mm.

RAINBOW



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PABLO PICASSO

—Shital

Picasso, an outstanding painter and sculptor of the 20th century, was born in 1881 in Spain. Picasso showed truly exceptional talent when very young. His first word was *la piz* (Spanish word for pencil), and he learnt to draw before he could talk. Many people realized that Picasso was a genius, but he wanted to do things in his own way, even if he disappointed

many who expected him to become a traditional painter. He constantly broke the rules of artistic tradition. He designed new forms to give fresh ways of seeing things in the world around us. He is probably best known for his 'Cubist' pictures which used simple geometric shapes and only a few colours.

THE BLIND BEGGAR

A beggar sat in front of a temple, asking for alms. He had a cloth spread before him. "Please extend your kind hand for this poor man!" he pleaded pitifully. "Be kind to this blind man!" he added to his pleas. People returning from the temple dropped on the cloth whatever coins they could spare.

Sundar came out of the temple and heard the beggar's plea. He was moved. But at the same time, he thought there was something strange about the man. He stationed himself at a distance and kept a close watch on the scene.

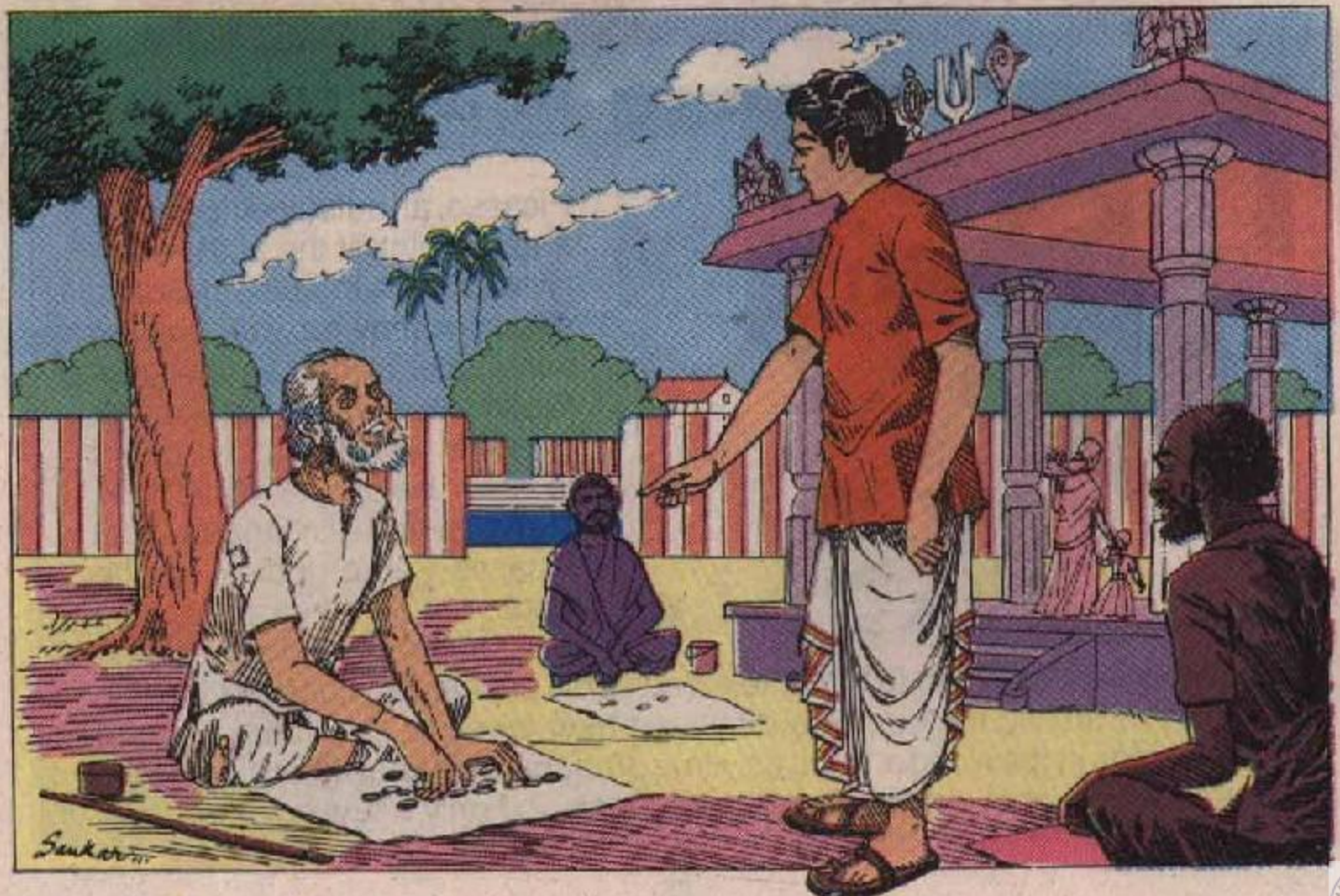
He saw the beggar looking around. He then picked up the coins, examined them, and counted them before he put them into his pocket. Now Sundar moved closer to him. "Please be kind to this poor blind man!" he heard the man's plea.

"Did you say you're blind?" Sundar asked him. "Who are you trying to convince that you're blind?" he said angrily.

"Sir, can you see the fields yonder? And the house painted a green? Beyond the fields is a coconut grove. Can you see them?"

"Of course, I can see them, very clearly," replied Sundar.

"There you are! That's the difference between you and I. I can't see them!"



ONLY A HOUND



In olden days there lived a poor poet known as Abu. There were days when he did not have a morsel of food to soothe his gnawing stomach. But hunger did not stop him to give flight to his imagination.

Once he wrote an ode upon the Caliph and eloquently recited it before him on the latter's birthday.

Greatly pleased and happy, the Caliph, who was in a very good mood, asked him, "Tell me, my good man, what reward would you like to have in return for this grand presentation?"

The poet fell into a reverie and then slowly said, "My lord, give me

only a hound and whatever is needed to make use of it."

"Only a hound and whatever is needed to maintain it? That is nothing!" exclaimed the amused Caliph. "Have it, by all means!"

A hound was accordingly ordered to be given to him.

"But this faithful animal would be of no use for hunting purposes without a horse. How am I to follow the chase?" said Abu with a chuckle.

At once a horse was provided for him.

"My Lord, many thanks for this handsome horse. But frankly speak-



ing, I have no one to attend to it," put in the poet.

"All right, I will give you an experienced stable-boy," promised the other.

"Now there is one more difficulty, Sir. When I return from the long chase, all fatigued and hungry, I should at least have someone who can cook for me the game got from the hunt," said Abu, looking really worried.

So one of the cooks from the royal kitchen was given to the poor man.

"O dear! O dear! What will I do now?" said the poet throwing up his hands.

"What's the matter?" asked the Caliph. "You've got everything that should go with a hound!"

"Indeed, I have, but a fresh problem has arisen from their midst! As you know, I live in a tumble-down hut, barely enough for me to lie down. Now where do I lodge all these presents that you have so generously bestowed upon me?" explained Abu

very plainly.

The Caliph, now beginning to appreciate the sharp mind of this seemingly simple man, said, "All right, one of my buildings in the city will be made ready for you!"

"Sir, I am deeply grateful to you for all that you have done for me," said the poor man with a graceful bow.

"So at last you are satisfied!"

"Almost, O great Monarch, but I am a poor man. There are days when I don't even have a morsel of food. Now, how am I to feed all these people?" he posed another problem.

A bagful of gold, an acre of cultivated land, and an orchard were ordered to be given to him.

So, from then on Abu the poet lived happily ever after. It was not before long that the good Caliph, highly impressed and amused by his brilliance and presence of mind, made him his court-poet and a noble, and showered on him many more gifts.

— Retold by Anup Kishore Das



The Land Of Sages and Poets

Text : Meera Nair ♦ Artworks: Goutam Sen

From Orissa, the land of temples, our journey takes us to West Bengal, the land of sages and poets.

The coastal strip beyond Orissa along the district of **Midnapur** is called the Kanthi coast. Midnapur is West Bengal's second-largest district. It is best known for its high quality mats, made from Hogla grass. The district is so fertile that paddy, bananas, mangoes, jack fruits and coconuts grow in abundance here.

The most popular seaside resort on the Kanthi coast is **Digha**. Its 8-km long beach, flanked by sand dunes on one side, is one of the finest in the country. The English knew the place as 'Beercool' and Warren Hastings, the first governor-general of Bengal, described it as the 'Brighton of the East'.

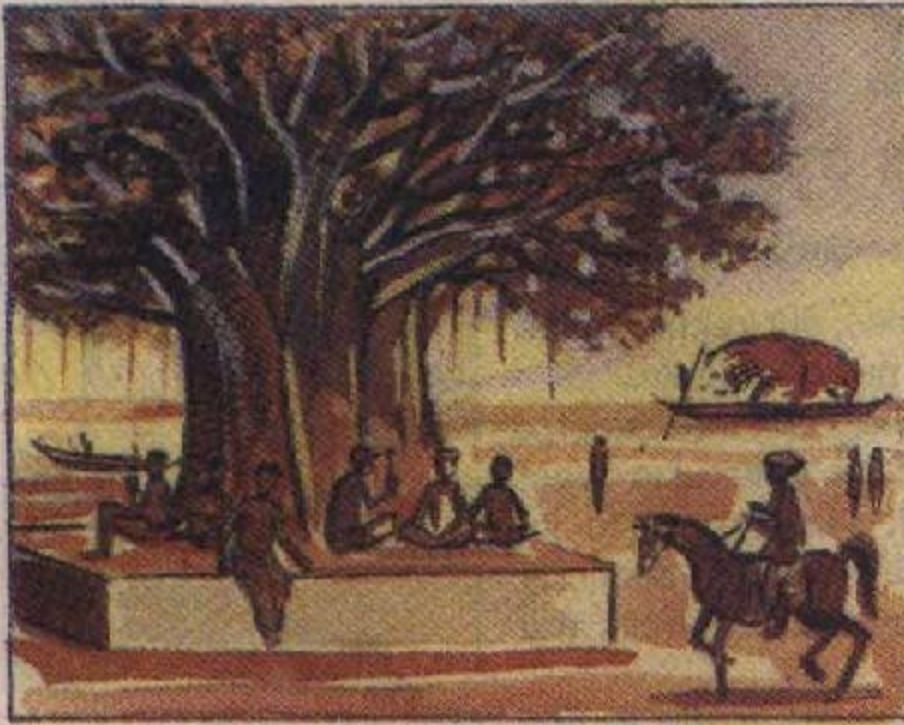
The calm shallow waters at Digha stretch for about a kilometre and a half into the sea. At low tide it is possible to drive down the beach without the tyres getting stuck in the sand. So firm is the sand that a light aircraft can land on it with ease.

At the end of the Kanthi coast, the river Ganga known as the Hooghly here, empties into the sea. Ships have navigated this broad, deep river from time immemorial.



Digha beach





The Boitak-khana at Sutanuti

the shade of a huge peepul tree, which came to be known as the 'Boitak-khana' or the sitting place and smoked hookahs as they conducted their business. One Sunday in August 1690, Job Charnock, an agent of the East India Company visited the place. Legend has it that he was so fascinated by the *Boitak-khana* that he chose it as the site for a warehouse for the Company. (The legendary tree was cut down in 1820 by Warren Hastings.)

Charnock founded the present city of Calcutta from the three villages - **Sutanuti, Gobindapur and Kalikata** - that he leased from Emperor Aurangzeb.

He became the first governor of Calcutta and lived there with his Indian wife whom he had rescued from committing sati at her husband's funeral pyre. Charnock died in Calcutta. His grave can be seen in St. John's Church.

A mispronunciation of the name Kalikata, by the British is said to have given rise to the name Calcutta. Many Bengalis believe that the city got its name because of the *kal kat*, the Bengali word for lime kilns, that existed in plenty there.

Of the 11 major ports in the country, Calcutta is the only riverine port. It is situated about 232km away from the sea. The port faces severe navigational problems and has to be constantly dredged. Ships have to be piloted across the river. There is fluctuation in the water's depth everyday and so the river has to be surveyed and charted continuously. The

A memorial to Job Charnock at St. John's Church

Tamralipti, the present **Tamluk** located slightly upstream, was an important port that rose to prominence in the 6th or 5th century B.C. Emperor Asoka is said to have travelled to Tamralipti to see off the ship carrying a branch of the Bo tree under which Buddha had got enlightenment, to Sri Lanka.

Sutanuti was a deserted village on the banks of the Hooghly. As the silting of the Hooghly made it difficult for large ships to sail up the river, traders set up a market at Sutanuti. They sat in



port at **Haldia**, downstream of **Calcutta** was commissioned in 1977 on account of the navigational problems faced at Calcutta. The Haldia port has one of the largest lock entrances in the world.

Until 1943, Calcutta was connected with **Haora** (Howrah), West Bengal's smallest district by the Haora bridge, a floating bridge. Heavy traffic congestion led to the

replacement of the bridge by the Rabindra Settu bridge, the largest cantilever bridge in the country. It is 457m long, has 8 lanes of traffic and 2 footpaths and is one of the busiest bridges in the world.



Rabindra Settu bridge

The Botanical Gardens at Shibpur in Haora was established in 1786. The garden is famous for its huge banyan tree which is 24.4m high and has a circumference of over 366m. Despite fungus having destroyed the main trunk, the tree with over a thousand roots remains healthy and continues to sprout more roots.

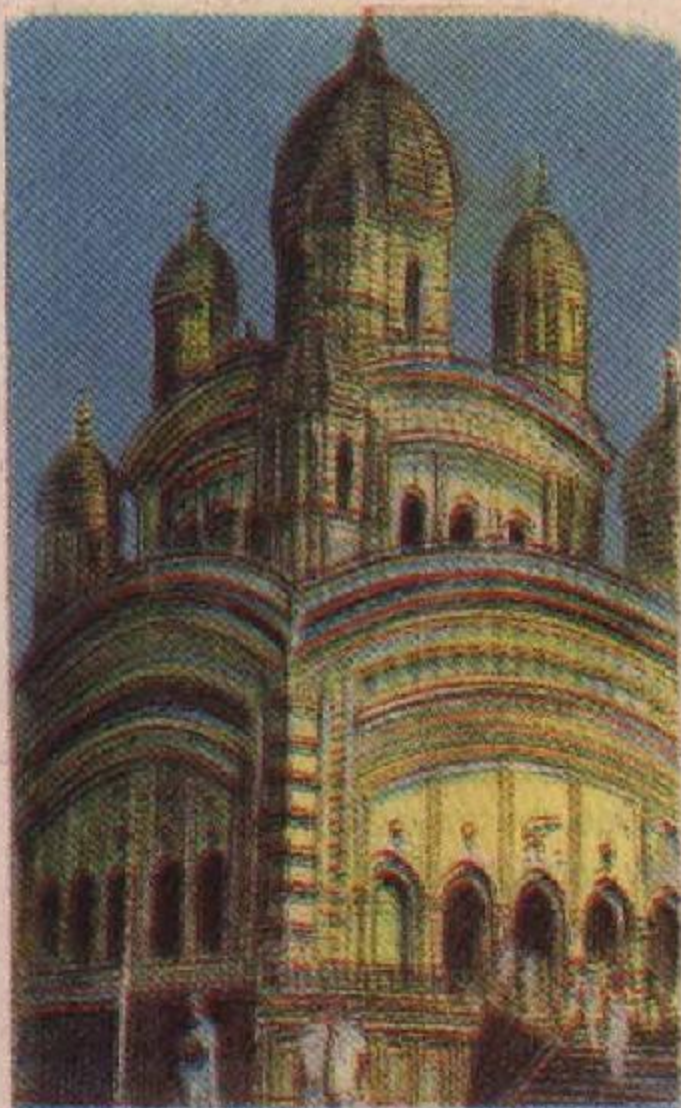
There are over 12,000 exotic plants here. They include giant water-lilies of the Amazon, nutmeg trees from Moluccas and oil palms from West Africa like the 24m high *Carypha elata*, which blooms just once in 40 years, giving out only one flower.

The Central National Herbarium in the garden has over 2.5million dried plants, and a valuable collection of books, journals and manuscripts on botany, forestry, agriculture, entomology and geology.



The international headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission is located at **Belur**, north of Haora. It was founded in 1899 by Swami Vivekananda, who was the disciple of **Ramakrishna Paramahansa**, the great saint who lived in the 19th century and

The huge banyan tree at the Botanical Gardens



Dakshineswar Kali temple

Himalaya, the Lord of the mountains fell in love with Siva. Her mother, Mena, was unhappy with her choice as she felt that a life with Siva would be full of hardships. But no matter how hard her parents tried to dissuade her from marrying Siva, she was adamant and spent her days doing penance to please Siva.

Touched by her devotion, Siva married her and took her home to Kailas. The parents who were unhappy at being distanced from their daughter looked forward to the few days when she visited them every year. Many Bengalis believe that Durga Puja is a festival that celebrates this visit of the goddess to her maternal home.

The clay idol of Durga



preached the unity of all religions.

The Belur Math has a temple that symbolises this belief. Its architectural features are a combination of a Hindu temple, a church and a mosque.

Just across the river Hooghly is the imposing **Dakshineswar Kali temple**. It was while serving as a priest in this temple that Ramakrishna is said to have attained the spiritual vision of the unity of all religions. The temple was built in 1847.

South of Dakshineswar is **Kumartuli**, the potters' corner. The Kumars or potters here make some of the best clay idols for Durga Puja. Most of the statues of the goddess are life-size and painted with brilliant colours. They are not baked as they are immersed in the holy river on the final day of the festival.

The Durga Puja is celebrated at Navratri or Dussehra around September/October. According to legend, Durga (Parvati), the beloved daughter of

The Saga of 1857



(The British East India Company or John Company, which came to India as mere merchants and traded with the country with the kind permission of the Indian Rajas, gradually started snatching territories from the native rulers. A time came when it grew so powerful and ambitious that it began dictating terms to the Indian Princes. One day the Company decided that any Raja who dies without leaving behind a son must forfeit his kingdom to the Company Raj. The ruler of Jhansi, on his death-bed, instructed his wife, Rani Lakshmibai, to adopt a son. This was perfectly within his rights. But the Company announced that Jhansi had become its property!

The narration is based on dependable works and legends prevailing in several parts of India.)

"Mother! O Maharani-ji! O our Devi! We will not allow ourselves to live if you are harmed by the foreigners!"

The common people, passing by the palace at Jhansi, would suddenly burst into such shouts. Nobody had asked them to do so. It was their spontaneous expression of love and reverence for their ruling queen. She

was truly dear to them. Nobles or farmers, priests or traders, all looked upon this young lady in her teens as their mother.

Before the John Company's wretched decision to take over her kingdom without the slightest sensible reason, this was the daily routine of the Rani (as quoted by V.D. Savarkar, in his *Indian War of Inde-*

2. A BROTHER'S ASSURANCE

pendence, from D.B. Parasnis's *Life of Lakshmibai*):

"The Bai got up at five in the morning and took a bath with fragrant *attar*. After dressing—and she generally wore a *Chanderi* saree of faultless white—she would sit for her daily prayers. ...she used to worship the Tulsi in the Tulsi grove. Then began the *Parthiva Puja* at which the Durbar musicians would sing in choir. Puraniks would then start reading the Puranas. Then Sirdars and dependants came and she returned their usual salutes. Being very keen of memory, even if a single man among the seven hundred and fifty who paid their respects to her in the morning—was not present, the very next day, the Bai would not fail to inquire why he did not come the previous day At three

she went to the Durbar, when she usually put on male attire. She wore a pyjama, a coat of dark blue, a cap on the head and a beautiful turban on the top of it, a *dupeta* of embroidered cloth round the slender waist, and the sword decked with gems by her side. Attired in this wise, this fair woman looked like Gauri herself. Sometimes she wore the female dress. After her husband's death, she never wore *nath* or similar ornaments. Her hands had round them bangles of diamond; she wore a small necklace of pearls round her neck and a diamond ring on her little finger. These were the only jewels ... Her hair was gathered up together behind. She wore a white *saree* and a plain white bodice. Thus, sometimes in male attire and sometimes in female, the Bai Sahib used to



honour the Durbar by her presence."

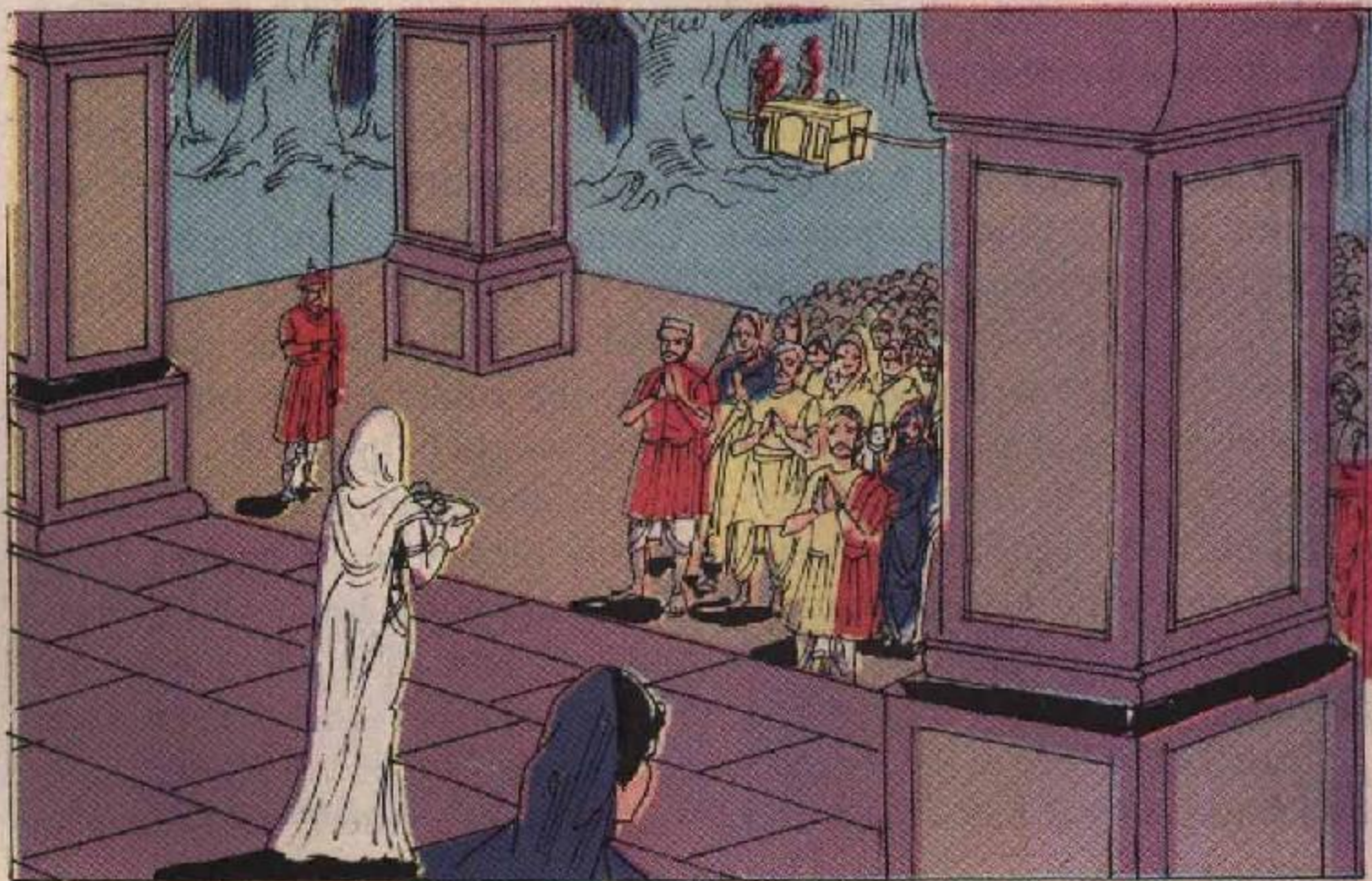
On certain days the Rani visited the shrine of Goddess Mahalakshmi, situated on a lake beautiful with lotus flowers. One morning, while returning from the shrine, she saw a crowd of people watching her from a distance. It was very cold and they were shivering, as they had hardly any clothes on them to protect them from the rigours of winter.

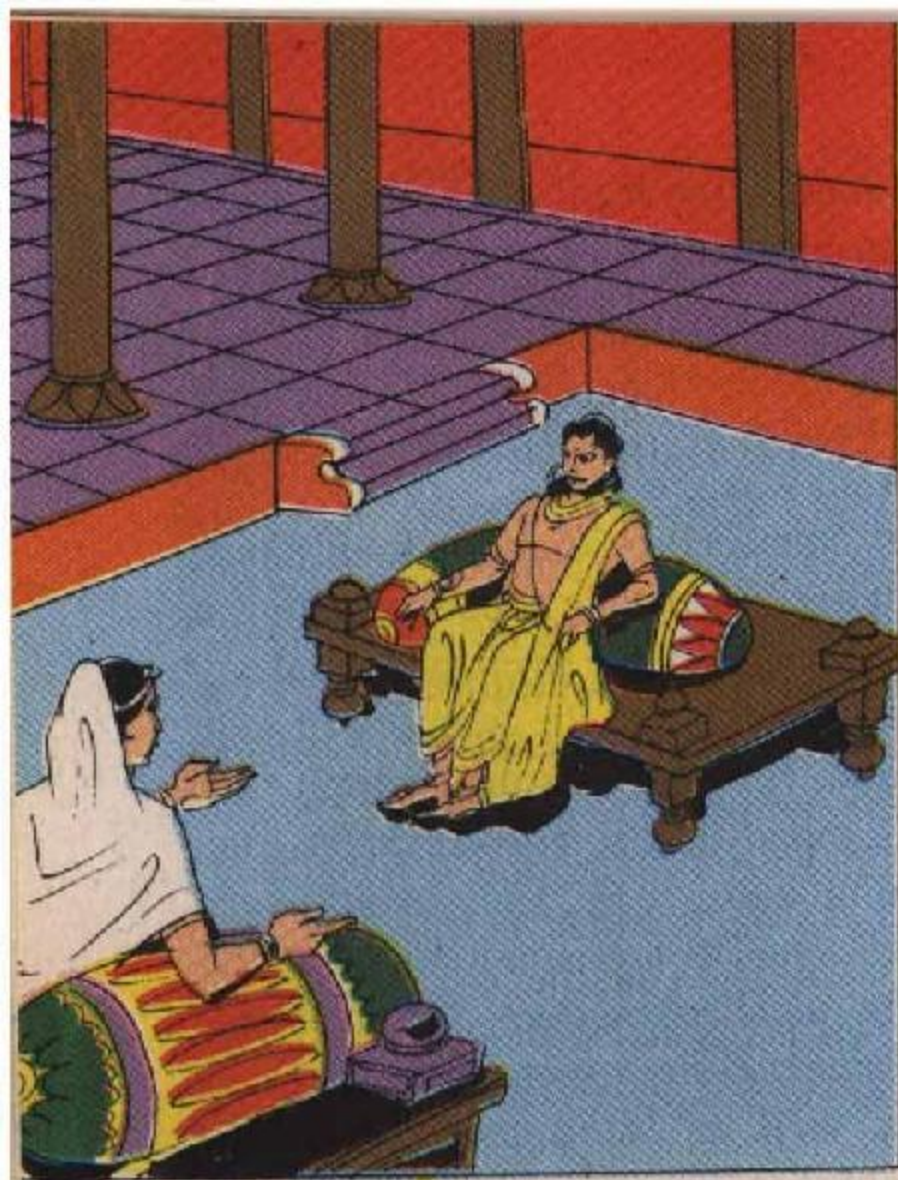
Tears came to the Rani's eyes. As soon as she reached the palace, she ordered that coats and caps be made for all the beggars and the poor in her kingdom. The services of every tailor, professional or amateur, were requisitioned. Thousands of sets of garments were made in a record time and they were distributed among the needy on an appointed day. One can

imagine the Rani's happiness when, on her next visit to the temple, she saw the crowd sufficiently dressed to fight the cold. And, one can also imagine the cheers with which the Rani was greeted.

She had no doubt the faithfulness of her own people and their readiness to sacrifice their lives for the sake of her dignity and the freedom of their land. But that was not enough. The Company's officers were crafty, cunning and cruel. They would take recourse to any immoral means to conquer her kingdom. She must have for her advisers, men who were brave as well as intelligent. She must mobilise her supporters and well-wishers.

Such a man was Chandan Huzoori, her god-brother, living in the ancient





city of Puri. She had visited the holy city, the seat of Lord Jagannath, when she was five, along with her parents. Those were days when pilgrims lived in the guest rooms of the priests of the deity. Chandan, the son of their priest, treated the little Lakshmi with great affection and Lakshmi's parents too looked upon the young man as their son. On an auspicious day, at the behest of her parents, Lakshmi put a little Mahaprasad, the sanctified food offered to the deity, into Chandan's mouth and addressed him as Brother.

"If I am your brother, you must let me share your pleasures and pains," said Chandan.

Chandan had been delighted at the news brought by a messenger from

Jhansi of her little sister becoming Rani. He sent through the messenger several presents for her, including Mahaprasad, and promised to meet her some day in the future. The messenger also carried the news to the Rani of Chandan's marriage which was to take place soon.

Once again the Rani's messenger met Chandan with valuable wedding gifts. Chandan was happy, but he also learnt from the messenger the danger looming large on the kingdom as well as the life of her loving sister. He detained the messenger and set out for Jhansi, along with him, as soon as his nuptial rituals were over.

When Chandan reached Jhansi, the atmosphere was already charged with excitement. Rani Lakshmibai was thrilled to see her brother, but she also took him to task for coming away from home so soon after his marriage.

"Can any elder brother be at peace and even enjoy life while a sister's dignity was in peril?" was Chandan's reply. And then, lowering his voice, he asked: "Have you made sure that, in the event of a war, the rulers of the other kingdoms would help you?"

"Brother, while some of them have openly pledged their support, some more have not done so. But I cannot think of any ruler not joining our battle against the treacherous feringhees!" replied the Rani.

"My noble sister!" said Chandan

in a sad tone. "What you cannot think can also happen. While passing a night in a roadside inn, I happened to overhear what two travellers, one of Gwalior and the other of Tehri, talking between them. Are those two Rajas with you?" he asked.

"Well, I don't know!" replied the Rani.

"Then they are with the John Company!"

"It is so hard to believe that!" muttered the Rani.

"I wish I were wrong! But it will be disastrous if some of the princes, among them your relatives, side with the enemy. But, of course, you have a great friend and compatriot in Nana Sahib. Together, you can prove the biggest challenge to the Company," said Chandan. "And you must allow me to remain beside you all the time. Should anything ominous happen to you, it should be on my dead body."

"My brother!" said the Rani in a low, sad but determined tone. "Please don't worry on account of my safety. If I am alive after my husband's death, it is to serve my people. As such, I have no fancy for an idle life. At the same time, I have no fancy for a useless death, if death comes for a cause, it is most welcome. My only regret is, many of my innocent countrymen may die with me."

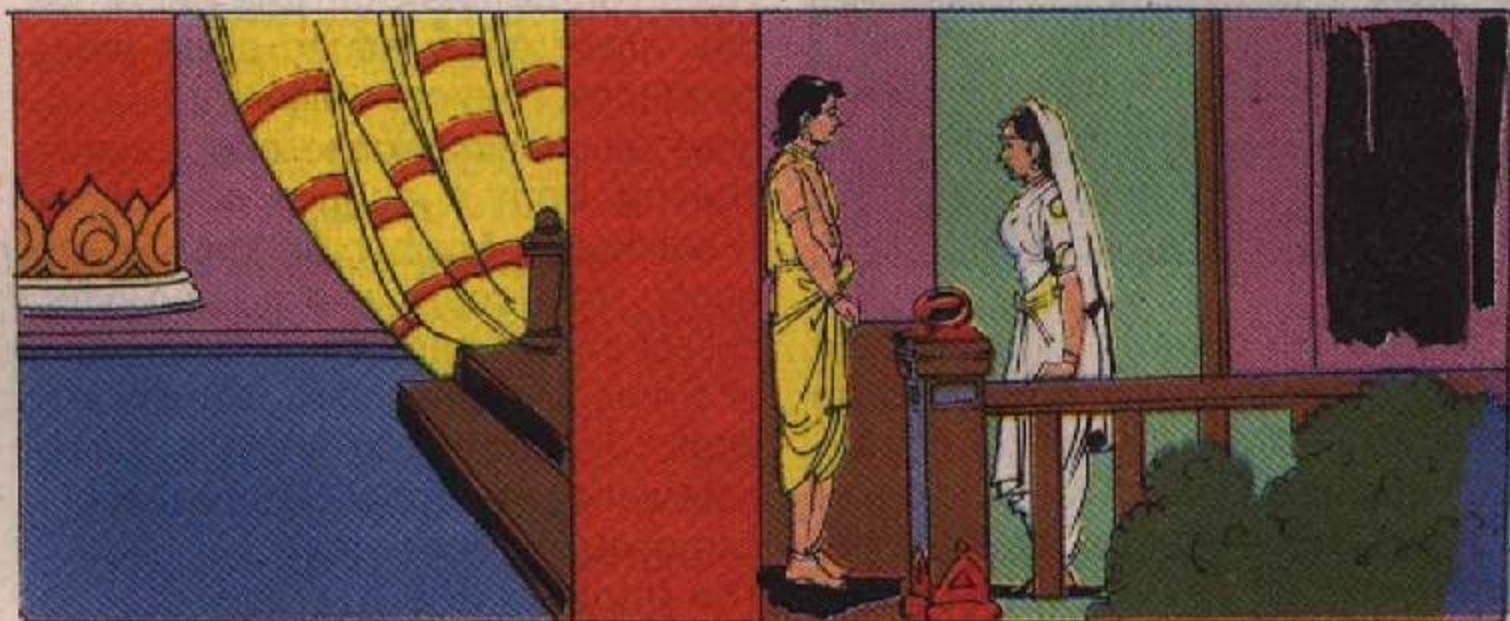
"They too are a brave people, my sister! Like you, they too would feel proud to sacrifice their lives for the cause of their freedom," observed Chandan.

"My brother, I must ask you to return to Puri, to your newly wed wife. Let your blessings be with me".

The Rani bowed to Chandan.

"My blessings are with you. But I too must be with you!" declared an adamant Chandan Huzoori.

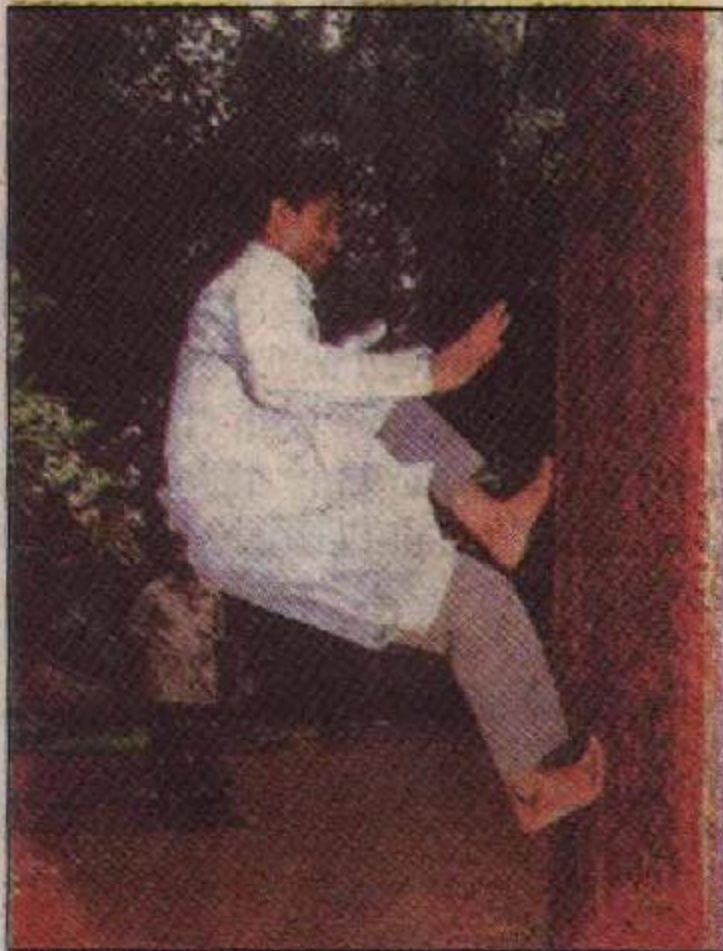
(To continue)



NEWS FLASH

Reverend Spiderman

You are all familiar with that popular comics character Spiderman, aren't you? And if you have watched movies with him as the hero, you would have seen him scaling walls and 'walking' along ceilings! Well, here's someone who can at least scale walls—rough, smooth or even wet—up to a height of, say, some 12 or 15 ft., at one go. Meet Reverend Father Mathew, of Mutholi



in Kerala. He does this feat without any difficulty, and once he reaches the maximum height, he does a somersault and lands on two feet. Holder of a Brown Belt in Karate, he does not climb walls for any show, though he does practise it almost regularly, to

keep himself trim. He was born in a family of agriculturists, and soon after he completed his 10th class, he offered his services to the church and went for training in divinity. While he was in a boarding at the seminary, their pet cat was trapped on the terrace and the doorway to the terrace remained locked. His roommates went in search of a ladder, but by the time they returned, Mathew had scaled the wall, rescued the cat, and was coming down in a leap. It was then that his friends knew, he had had some coaching in Karate in Pune. If you see 'Reverend Spiderman' in action, you'll be awestruck.

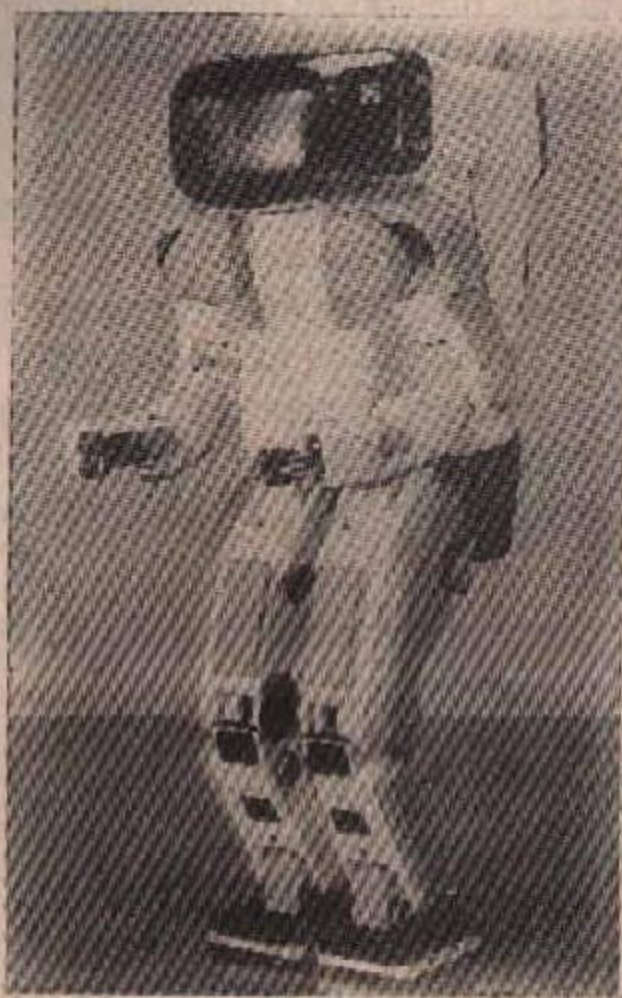
Coin Collection

Mujibur Rahman is a mason, who, nobody would believe, could take an interest in collecting coins. He started this hobby just a year ago and he has in his collection a variety of Indian coins minted during the days of Queen Victoria, George V, and George VI. However, he has a unique set of 44 one rupee coins issued since Independence. They carry different 'heads', 'themes', inscriptions, and details. Hailing from a suburb of Calicut (Kozhikode), Mujibur Rahman is still hunting for a coin that is missing in his collection—a rupee coin with the head of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. He began his collection when a rupee note with a picture of Mahatma Gandhi came into his possession.

The thinking Robot

Now meet "P-2", the humanoid ro-

bot, which has been fabricated by that famous Japanese firm, Honda. "He" is 6ft. tall, weighs 210 kg., and looks almost like a man wearing a spacesuit. He can walk on his two feet, forward and backward, on flat surface or on an incline, turn around, and if he were to reach a staircase, he will easily climb the steps. Try to knock him down; he



will balance himself and avoid a fall. Of course, he can use his two hands, too, as the situation demands. His "creators" are Prof. Susumu Tochi, of the Department of Robotics, Tokyo University, and his team.

Calendar at his fingertips

Seven years old Nufile is a Second Standard student in Manjeri, Kerala. You ask him what day is September 1 and he will say Monday, of course, not by turning the calendar sheet. He can answer 364 similar questions about the year 1997. At the same time, this

below-average-in-class child would only blink if you were to ask him how much is 10 plus 10! How come, then, this calendarability?

The boy has no explanation. However, he can easily recollect all the major events in his home, neighbourhood, town, State, and the country and he will tell you on which day this year they had happened. Isn't that some uncanny memory?

Newsium

A museum for news, that's it! Opened recently in Armington, in the U.S.A., this unique place is especially meant for children, who wish to get the thrill of working in a newspaper office. A visitor can become a reporter or an editor. He or she can even "publish" a paper with the help of the computers installed there. The visitor can experience the pressure an editor normally is subjected to while choosing the news items pouring from all over the world. In another section, the visitor can take the role of a TV announcer or a running commentator. Or if he is so keen, he can even have a "face to face" session with some of the leading editors. A main exhibit is a huge globe which flashes news just then happening in any part of the world. If one were to key in one's date of birth, a TV screen nearby will flash page 1 of a newspaper of his choice of that day. Worth a visit, eh?



Nothing to Do with Art!

★ *What is the meaning of the expression "state-of-the-art"? asks Mohan Bhatia, of Hazratganj.*

It only means that the most modern or advanced techniques or methods or knowledge in technology are used in a machine or a network of machines or even in running an organisation. When AIRBUS was introduced for the domestic air service in India, the plane was described as having state-of-the-art technology. The expression is used as an adjective.

★ *I often come across the expression "horse trading" in newspapers. What does it mean? asks Lakshmi Satyamurthi, of Bangalore.*

When incentives-generally in the form of money-are offered to a member of the legislature to resign from one party and join another, it is called horse trading. The actual meaning is a clever business dealing, or a shrewd bargaining, which results in an understanding between the two parties. People owning race horses keep an eye for animals winning races and try to buy them for their studs. Such purchases are made after some hard bargaining.

TELL - TALE WORDS

Thespian

Thespis was a Greek poet of the 6th century B.C. In those days, there was no entertainment, like drama or action on a stage, as we know of it now. There was only a tradition of mixing chorussing and dancing. It was in this background Thespis introduced his novel idea of individual action through monologue. That is, he spoke and acted singly on the stage. Later, dialogue was also introduced. Thus, the drama was born. Thespis is, therefore, considered to be the founder of the tragic drama.

Thespis travelled about in a cart using it as a stage for his performances. This form of entertainment did not get wholesome public approval for about 2,000 years. The mobile stageperformers were considered as vagabonds even about 500 years ago.

The word Thespian nowadays means an actor, this being an honour to Thespis, the Father of the Drama. You would perhaps recall, our winners of 'best cinema actor awards' being referred to as Thespians - like Dilip Kumar or Shivaji Ganesan.

Solution to last month's "Add and Jumble"

1. SACRED 2. SOUTH 3. RAVENOUS 4. ANGER 5. DATES 6. ANGEL
7. MODEST 8. PLEASANT 9. MARBLE 10. AVAIL



New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire

That's only fair!

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikram did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, normally you should be enjoying a good sleep at this hour of the night. Instead of doing that, what makes you go through this strange ritual? Why should you be so adamant? It may cause confusion and indecision. You wouldn't know what is possible, what is impossible. There's the finest example of such a dilemma in the story of Girinath. He wished to become rich, quick. He did get some opportunities, but he didn't take advantage of them, he didn't make use of them at the appropriate time. Come on, you must hear that story."





The vampire then began his narration.

Girinath of Udaygiri had only one wish. To become a rich man. The trouble was, he did not want to make any special effort to achieve his ambition. He wished to become rich in quick time. What was the way out? He had heard of authors amassing wealth. Could he also start writing books? He had heard of the well known *pundit* of the place, Krishna Shastri. He decided to call on him.

"Most revered punditji!" he said after prostrating before Krishna Shastri. "I very much wish to be instructed in grammar and literature. Please take me as your *shishya*"

"Before I accept you as my disciple, I'll have to give you one or

two tests," said Shastri. "I must find out whether you're deserving of a teacher like me. Only after that would I decide to take you as my ward."

Girinath stayed with Krishna Shastri for a week. The pundit was able to assess his talent. "Girinath, I'm afraid you've no aptitude for literature," remarked Krishna Shastri, "nor do you have a knack to learn grammar and the nuances of using language. However, I find that you've a good voice, and that you like music. Learn music, and you'll be able to make good earnings by becoming a musician. You must have heard of Kamalnath of Kamlapur. He's a great musician and a popular music teacher. I shall give you a letter for him. You must go and meet him."

Girinath then started for Kamlapur, where he called on Kamalnath, and handed over the letter given by Krishna Shastri. "Girinath, you've to be with me for a week. I must find out how talented you are in singing. Only then can I take you as my disciple," said the music teacher.

The young man stayed with Kamalnath and sang for him whenever he was asked. At the end of one week, the teacher told him, "Girinath, I don't think music suits your aptitude. I find that you've long fingers fit for an artist. Probably you can have a bright future as a painter. I know of a famous artist called Shivkumar. He's in Simhapura. You may go and tell him

that you are meeting him at my instance."

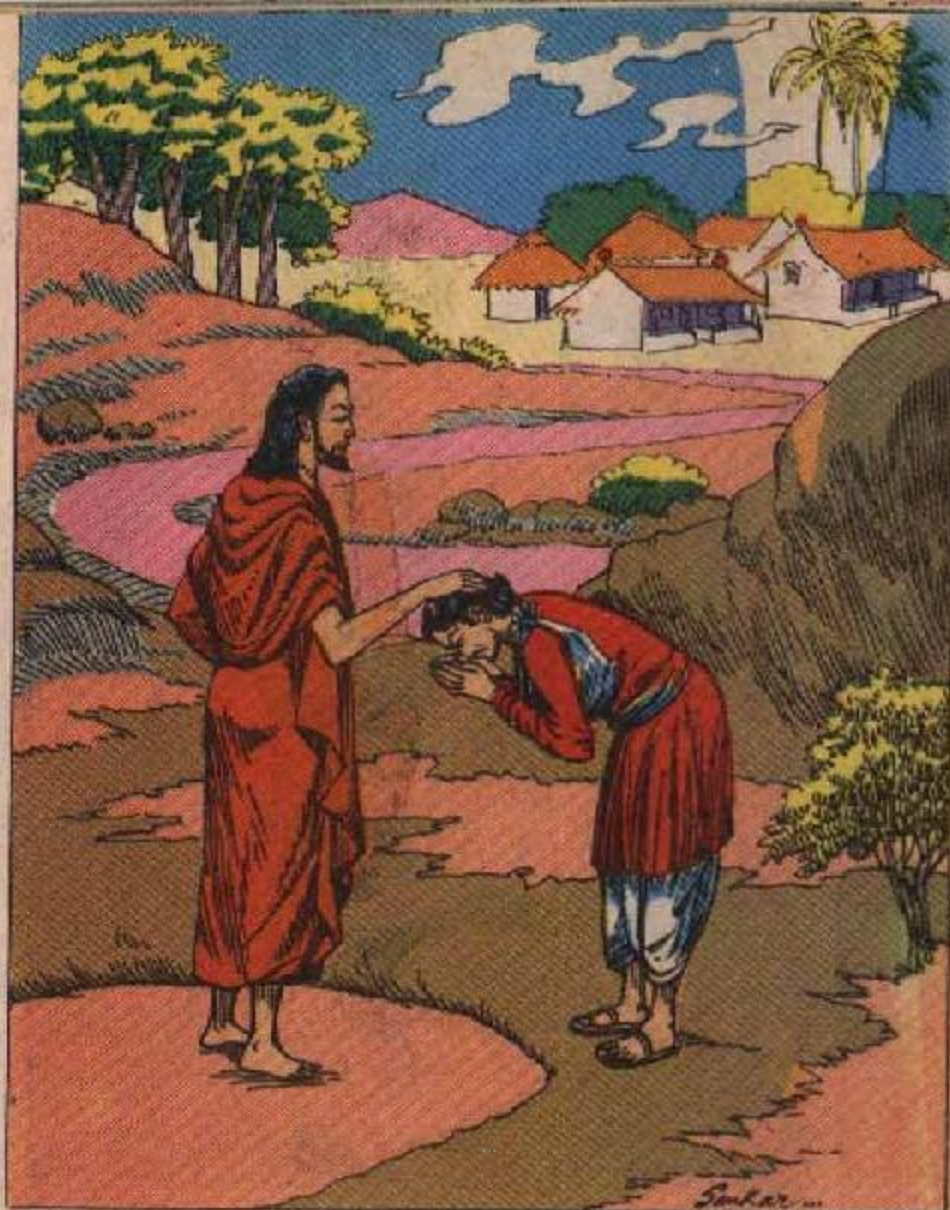
Now Girinath proceeded to Simhapura and met Shivkumar. He, too, tested his talents for a week and said, "I'm rather disappointed. I don't think you're cut for the career of an artist. I feel you'll shine as a litterateur or a grammarian or a poet. You should pay more attention to those talents. Don't waste your time. You go and meet Krishna Shastri. He'll take you as his *sishya*."

Girinath was now back to square one, so to say. He was thoroughly dejected. He decided to return home. As he was approaching Udaygiri, he heard a wail of distress. "Save me! O save me please!"

He rushed to where he thought the cries had come from. He saw a *sanyasi* in a deep pit. Presumably he had slipped into it. Girinath took pity on him and extended his hand to pull him out. The *sanyasi* started laughing. Because he did not need any assistance. The next moment he was standing in front of Girinath smiling. And there was no trace of any pit as well.

Girinath was surprised. He could not believe his eyes. "Swami, you seem to possess some mysterious powers," he said, "but what I can't understand is, why then did you cry for help? You must have some reason for that!"

"What you said is true," replied



the *sanyasi*. "I'm always looking for people who are eager to help others. Such people will somehow or other come to my notice. And I oblige them and share my powers with them. They will all be fortunate to receive my blessings. Today, you've become one such fortunate person. You may ask whatever boon you want."

Hitherto, he was knocking at the door of Fortunate. But today, Girinath seemed to have crossed the path of Fortune. He narrated his experiences with the pundit, music teacher, and the artist, and how they all turned him back, without helping him.

The *sanyasi* listened to him and then placed his hands on Girinath's head. "From today, you'll shine as an





erudite scholar, a talented musician, and a capable artist. But, all that will not make you rich. If you become rich, it will be only due to the qualities inherent in you." After blessing Girinath, the sanyasi went his way.

Girinath proceeded to call on Krishna Shastri. "Remember, you had turned me away when I requested you to make me your disciple. You thought that I was not capable of learning grammar and the nuances of language. If one were to try hard, there's nothing that one cannot learn. All right, I'm now going to ask you some questions. Let me see whether you will answer them."

The pundit answered some of the questions. But he was unable to

answer many other questions. "Girinath, I must concede you're certainly more knowledgeable than I. But tell me, how did you manage to acquire all that knowledge?" He was all praise for the young man, who of course did not reveal anything about meeting the sanyasi.

Girinath then went over to Kamalnath, the music teacher. He persuaded his teacher to sing a *raga*, and when the teacher stopped, Girinath pointed out certain flaws in his delineation of the *raga*, and sang the *raga* himself. Kamalnath's joy knew no bounds. "That was superb, Girinath! You're the king of musicians, I must say. There's no one to excel you in music. I bow before your knowledge of music."

Girinath did not stop with that. He promptly went over to meet Shivkumar of Simhapura. The artist was then giving the finishing touches to a painting. Girinath sought his permission to make some changes. He took the brush and with some masterly strokes, he completed the painting, which now acquired some life. Shivkumar could not believe his eyes. "What talent!" he remarked. "I myself wouldn't have finished the painting that way, Girinath. You're the greatest artist in the world, I've no doubt about it. Who's there to challenge you?"

Girinath was walking back home when he thought, 'How can I convert



my newly acquired talent into money?" He had heard of King Veerendrakumar of Vijayapura honouring experts in different fields with rewards and awards. Girinath now went over to attend his durbar.

The king invited him to exhibit his talents. Veerendrakumar was very happy. "It's houses where pundits like you reside that should possess priceless treatises and ancient manuscripts," he remarked. He then ordered a palmyrah leaf manuscript to be brought from the royal library. "This is a very ancient manuscript which has been in the possession of our dynasty for ages together. It's priceless because it is a part of the manuscript written by Lord Vinayaka to the dictation of Vedavyasa. It might be a leaf from the original *Mahabharata*. I want you to keep this in your possession." The king very reverentially placed the manuscript in the hands of Girinath.

His face went pale, because he was expecting gold and jewels. And what did he get? An old manuscript! Anyway he did not express his disappointment. He put out a wide smile. "Girinath, do one thing," said Veerendrakumar. "The King of Jayapura is a good friend of mine. He is a lover of music. Please meet him, and I am sure he will appreciate your singing and reward you suitably."

Girinath then proceeded to Jayapura, all the while hoping that at

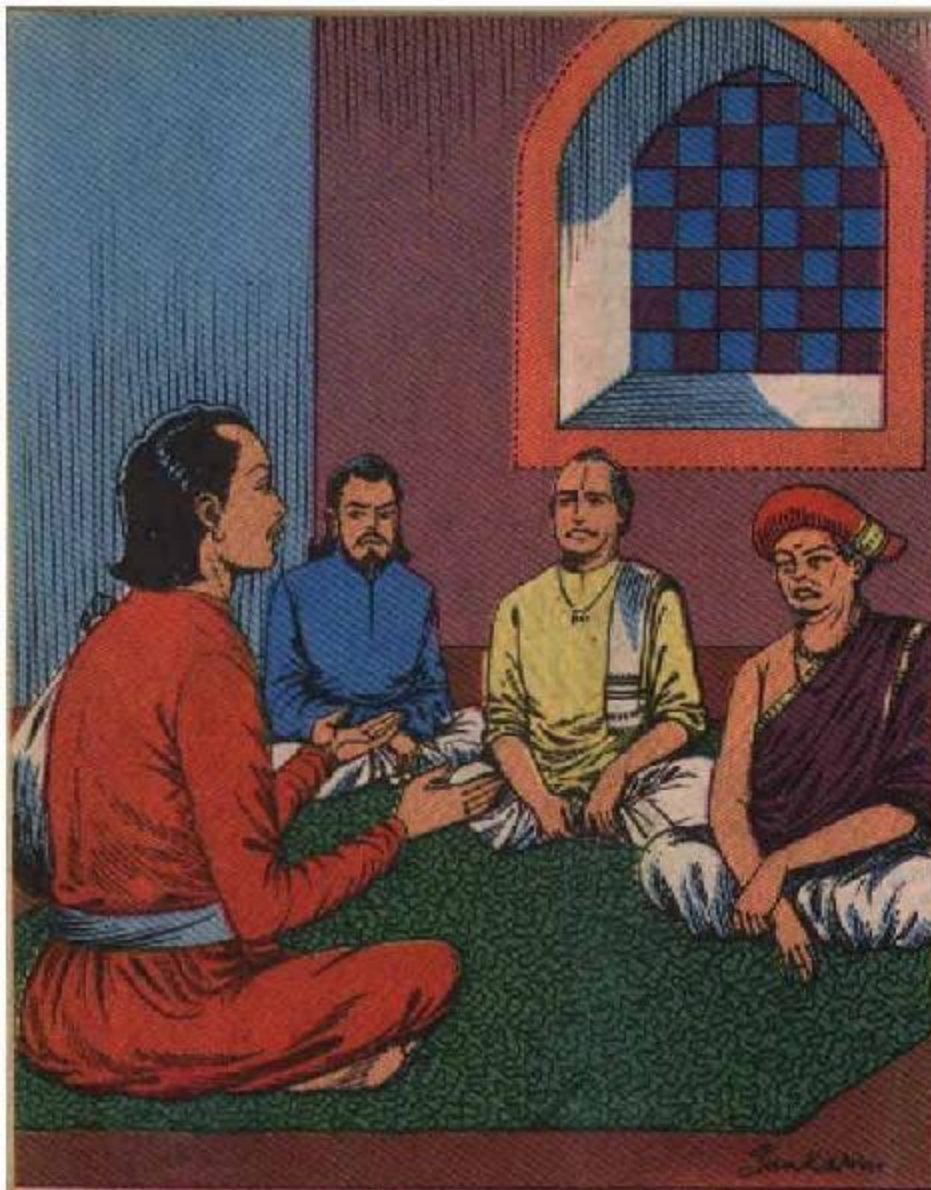


least in that kingdom he would be presented with a lot of gold.

King Jayaraj was happy to meet him when he told the king that it was his friend Veerendrakumar who had sent him there. He asked Girinath to sing a few songs. Jayaraj forgot himself while listening to the melodious music.

He asked him to wait and went to his private chambers and brought out a trinket-box. Opening it he showed a piece of copper sheet carefully folded into two. "This contains the original notation of a song composed by sage Narada himself in praise of Lord Vishnu. This is a family heirloom. I would like to present you with this priceless possession. Take it





as a royal gift! I'm very proud of you!"

Girinath was once again disappointed. But he never gave any indication of his frustration but gracefully accepted the gift. King Jayaraj said: "I'm told that you're also a talented painter. I have a relation called Girijaprasad, who is a successful artist. I am sure he would love to meet you. He would certainly reward you properly." He then explained how he could reach Girijaprasad's house.

Girinath decided to try his luck with Girijaprasad. He gave him a brush and paints and prompted him to paint a picture. Girijaprasad was very happy. "I'm happy that Jayakumar

has introduced a great artist to me. What shall I give you as reward?" He thought for a while, and then took out from a wooden box something looking like a frieze. "This is of the same period of the Ajanta paintings and has several similarities. Please accept it as a humble gift from me."

As he was leaving, Girijaprasad said: "Have you met our King Purnachandra? I'm told he is a great one at honouring talented people. You must call on him."

Girinath decided that he would as a last effort meet the king. When he reached the capital, he found that Krishna Shastri, Kamalnath, and Shivkumar were already there. On enquiry, he was told that the next day, there would be several competitions and that they all had assembled to take part in the contests. When they saw Girinath, their faces went pale. If he were to compete, then they would have no chance of winning any prize.

Girinath seemed to have read their mind. "All of you're my teachers," he said, to put them at ease. "If I'm in this position now, it's all because of your blessings. I shall not compete against my *gurus*. I shall only be one in the audience. You must compete and win rewards and honours. However, if anybody were to beat you, then I shall challenge them. I hope none of you will have any objection to that." The three faces now brightened up.

The contests started. Each one of

them put out the best of their talents. And each one of them was awarded the top prize. And that was a hundred thousand gold coins.

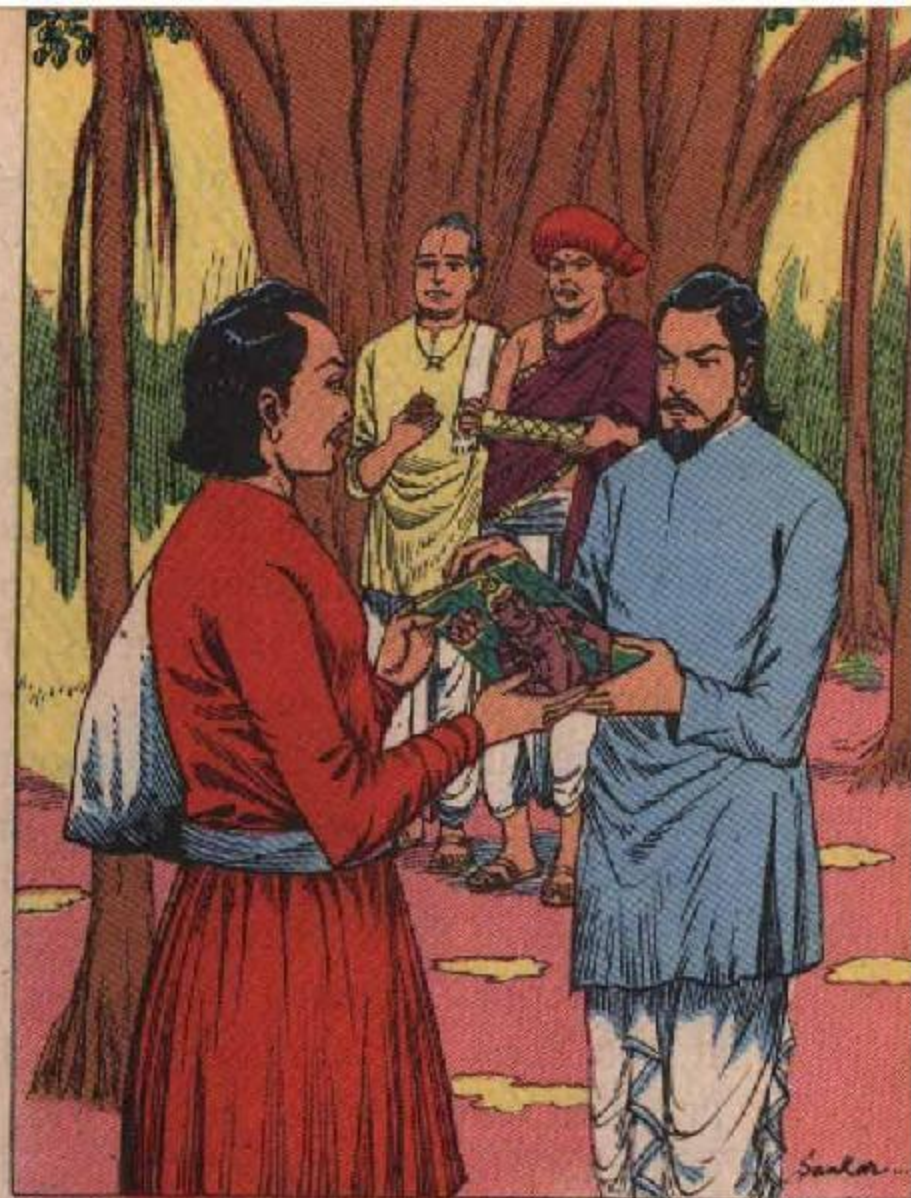
When they went back to the guest house where they were staying, they said in unison: "We've won the first prizes, maybe because you did not compete against us. So, we wish to share our prize with you, Girinath."

Girinath merely laughed. "No, I shall not accept anything as charity."

"We appreciate your stand," said Krishna Shastri on behalf of the others, too. "All right. But you can teach each one of us what we don't know in our respective fields. You can accept a remuneration from us."

Girinath thought for a while. True, each one of them wished to improve their knowledge. But at the same time, he realised his limitations. "What do I have more than what you already know? There's nothing. However, I've with me three priceless objects - a manuscript in the hand of Vinayaka, a copper plate carrying a composition of sage Narada, and a frieze from the period of the Ajanta paintings. I would like to give them to you. I've no idea how much they are worth."

All the three were overjoyed on hearing this. "What a surprise! They are all rare objects. We would certainly have them. You don't have to assess their value. They are all priceless. All the money that we got, we shall give you in return," said Shastri.



Girinath again thought for a while. "We shall discuss that by and by. Let's go to the shade of that tree and think about it." All four of them then went and sat in the shade. After a while, Girinath said: "Whatever punditji said is right. In your respective fields, all of you are great experts. So, you deserve these antiques. Krishna Shastri should keep the manuscript; Kamalnath would like to treasure the copper plate of sage Narada; and there cannot be a better person than Shivkumar to possess the frieze. Here, I'm passing them on to you for your custody. You may give me the prize money you've received."

They handed the gold coins to Girinath and went their way.



The vampire concluded his narration at that point and turned to Vikramaditya. "O King! Girinath acquired proficiency in the three fields with the blessings of the sanyasi. He could have very well taken part in the competitions and won all the prizes and more. In fact, his ambition was to become rich, wasn't it? Instead of competing and receiving the rewards from the king, why did he go about disposing of the antiques that had come into his possession? Why did he exchange those priceless objects for gold coins? Wasn't it a foolish act? If you know the answers and still prefer to remain silent, need I warn you what'll happen to you? Your head will be blown to a thousand pieces!"

King Vikramaditya did not take the vampire's threat seriously, because he had the answers to his questions. "When the sanyasi gave him the boon, he had reminded Girinath that he might acquire a large amount of knowledge, but such proficiency

would not bring him riches. If at all he earned money, it would be as a result of his own inherent qualities. That was the condition. Girinath became an expert in all the three fields of literature, music, and painting only because he received the sanyasi's blessings. That's why he allowed the other three, who had acquired knowledge through study and training, to compete in the contests. That showed his sincerity and sense of fairness. He also realised that they deserved the antiques that had come into his possession as a reward for exhibiting his proficiency which was not genuine. So, he passed them on to the pundit, music teacher, and artist, in exchange for money which he preferred to possess. That was an intelligent and just act."

The vampire realised that the king had outwitted him again. He flew back to the ancient tree carrying the corpse with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.



Sports Snippets

Cricket records crash at Colombo

Conjure up this picture for yourselves: India were playing Sri Lanka in the First Test at Colombo for the Asia Cup on August 5. India made 537 runs for 8 wickets and declared.

Sri Lanka only wanted to avoid a follow on. But the partnership for the second wicket between Sanath Jayasuriya and Roshan Mahanama



Jayasuriya



Mahanama

yielded 576 runs. The total then was 615 runs for 1 wicket. The next day, Sri Lanka went on to score 952 for 6 and declared, wiping out the record of 903 runs for 7

declared made by England against Australia way back in 1938.

★ Jayasuriya's individual score was 340. He became the 13th batsman to score a triple century in Tests. On August 5, at the end of the play, he had reached 326. At that point, he was the eighth batsman with the highest triple century. The next day, everybody thought he might even surpass the West Indian Brian Lara's all time record of 375 runs (1993-94). But Jayasuriya fell short by 35 runs when his innings ended at 340. He was then placed fourth after W.Indies's Gary Sobers's 365 not out (1957-58), and Len

Hutton's 364 (1938). As Jayasuriya walked back to the pavilion, he was "moist eyed and terribly dejected", as reports said.

★ The second wicket partnership of 576 runs was the all time best for any wicket in Test cricket. It was only one short of the First Class record for any wicket made by Vijay Hazare and Gul Mohammad in 1934-35.

★ When Mahanama fell after scoring 225 runs, India were getting the second wicket after toiling for 753 minutes.

★ Earlier, the first wicket fell at 39, when Marvan Atapattu was bowled by Niles Kulkarni, caught by Nayan Mongia. For Kulkarni, it was a great distinction as he became the first Indian to capture a wicket with his first ball in Test cricket. He was the 12th bowler to achieve the feat. The last time something similar happened was in 1991 when England's Richard Illingworth got a West Indies wicket with his first ball at Nottingham. And the first ever time it happened was a hundred years ago. The distinction then went to A. Coningham of Australia in the 1894-95 series.

Woodcock's greatest

We all know of *Wisden* - which compiles cricket history year after year. *Wisden's* ratings are held in high esteem. Now, John Woodcock, who was one time cricket correspondent of *The Times*, London, is a veteran inasmuch as he had 'covered' more than 400

Gavaskar



Tests. Recently, the newspaper invited him to write a series on the hundred cricketers he would rate as the greatest. Five Indians feature in his list. Sunil Gavaskar has been placed at number 23, Sachin Tendulkar at 25, Kapil Dev at 49, Bishen Singh Bedi at 50, and Vinoo Mankad at 92. W.G. Grace occupies the No. 1 position, followed by Don Bradman, and Garfield Sobers. Pakistan's Imran Khan has been given the 16th slot; Javed Miandad stays at 58, Wasim Akram at 60, Waqar Younis at 71, Fazal Mahmood at 82, and Hanif Mohammad at 84. No other Indian or Pakistani player finds a place in the list prepared by Woodcock, who feels that the best batsmen are from England, and the best bowlers from Australia. Do you agree?

Top Scorer

Here's yet another list — of footballers of the year — actually the first half of 1997. The top scorer in the first six months is Japan's Kazuyoshi Miyura with 16



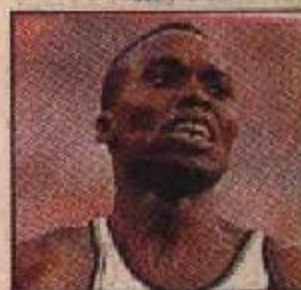
goals in his pocket. Next come Ronaldo of Brazil and Kareem Bakhedi of Iran's with 13 goals each. Romario of Brazil with 11 goals is placed third. Some of the football fans amongst you may remember Iran's Ali

Deyi, who had 22 goals to his tally in 1996. He has scored only 6 goals in the first half of this year. The list has been prepared by the Statistics section of FIFA, after taking into consideration all the 'A' Class International matches and FIFA-sponsored matches.

All the difference in 3 days

When the 10 day World Athletic

Championships ended in Athens on August 10, the page for world records remained blank, despite the presence and participation of record-breakers like Michael Johnson, Wilson Kipketer, and Donovan Bailey, though some close attempts did come off. However, there was *just one* world record, and this was made by 19-year old Sally Barsosio of Kenya, who established a world junior record by clocking 31 minutes 32.92 seconds in 10,000 metres. When she participated in the same event in 1993, she was the youngest ever medallist (bronze) in the championships. However, on August 13, three world records were shattered at the Zurich Grand Prix, one of them wiping out the oldest standing record. This was made by Denmark's Wilson Kipketer



Wilson Kipketer

who clocked 1 min. 41.24 seconds to better Sebastian Cel's 1:41.73 made in 1981. The other records

came from Ethiopia's Haile Gebrselassie, who broke his own record (12:44.39) for the 5,000 metres with a time of 12:41.86, and Wilson Boit Kipketer of



Kenya who timed 7 min. 59.08 seconds, breaking Kiptanui's record of 7:59.18 made in 1995 in Zurich itself. Each of these three athletes earned a bonus of \$50,000 and a kilo of gold!



When did people start considering cats as sacred animals?

-Bharati Raja, Satyamangalam

Some 3,000 years ago, in Egypt, people began looking upon cats as sacred. They were given jewellery—like necklaces and earrings—and worshipped in temples. When they died, they were buried with great respect. Some of the bodies were even mummified.

What are the advantages of a spacesuit for astronauts?

- Bibhuti Patnayak, Puri

On earth, we are protected by what is called the atmospheric blanket. But when we venture into space, this protection is no more available. Like the air that we need for breathing, and the atmospheric pressure necessary for preventing blood from reaching boiling point, and the natural protection against radiation. Inside the aircraft these conditions are produced artificially, but the astronaut will need a spacesuit for different operations inside the aircraft and during an emergency.

What is acupuncture? When was it first practised?

- Suresh Bhalla, Faridabad

Acupuncture is a method of medical treatment, which originated in China nearly 2,500 years ago. The practitioners then located more than 360 spots on the human body where small metal needles could be inserted to relieve pain, the needles themselves causing no pain. Each of these spots is supposed to be "linked" to a particular organ in the body, though it may not be anywhere near the organ itself. These days, acupuncture—the needles remaining in the spot for less than 15 minutes—is widely accepted as a form of treatment.

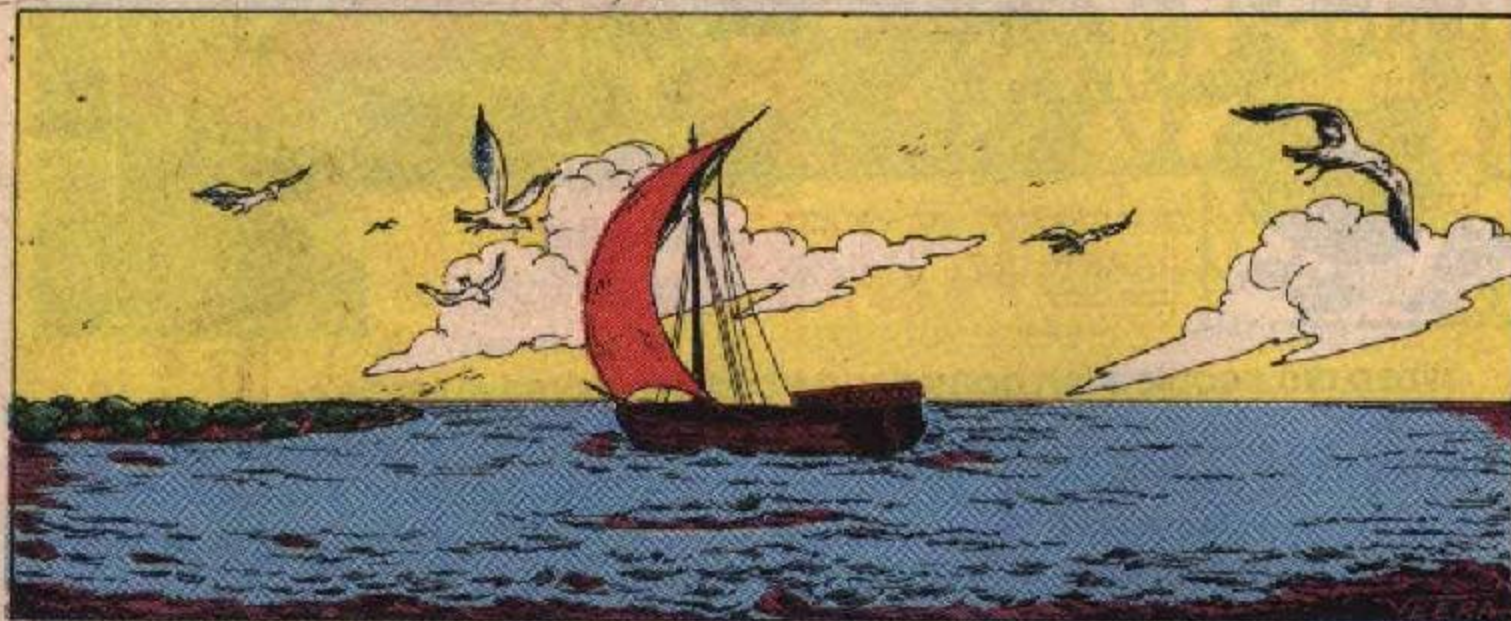
Who invented the bicycle?

- Usha Malhotra, Hoshangabad

The invention of the bicycle is credited to Kirpatrick MacMillan of Scotland around 1840. Earlier, some crude attempts seemed to have been made, where movement was produced by pushing the feet against the ground. But MacMillan attached rods to the pedals, and these rods were made to move the rear wheel. The first chain-driven cycle was produced in 1869. Improvements were made later in stages—like a large driving wheel and a small trailing wheel, then two wheels of the same size, and wheels with air-filled tyres.

God's Will be Done

Part 2



The story so far : The King of Manikyapuri is an atheist. He pooh- poohs any suggestion that God's will be done and man cannot change what He has decided for him. His subjects are happy. One day, in the course of his tour of the kingdom, he meets a grief-stricken poor man who attributes his misfortune to god's inscrutable ways. His house catches fire and the crop from his farms perish; the next year, the crops are washed away by floods; the third year he takes a loan from a trader to rebuild the house. The trader passes away suddenly and his son is impatient to get back the loan. The man allows him to take away his farm lands with the crops on them. He has come to his wit's end. The way the king argues with him that either his wife or he himself has been responsible for the misfortune, the man recognises the king. He threatens to send the man away to nearby Rakshas Dweep where nobody would dare go, only to prove that God cannot be depended on everytime and man has to be self-reliant.

The poor man and his family took abode in the palace at the instance of the king, who was all the time preparing to send him to the demon-infested island. One day, he was taken aboard a ship in the company of four soldiers. "These soldiers will come back to fetch you after six months," said the king to the man, who now realised that he should not have tried the king's patience by insisting that man's fate is guided by god. "They

will land on the shore and wait for you to make your appearance within three hours. If you are still alive, you should meet them and they will bring you back here. If they do not see you, they will return after three hours."

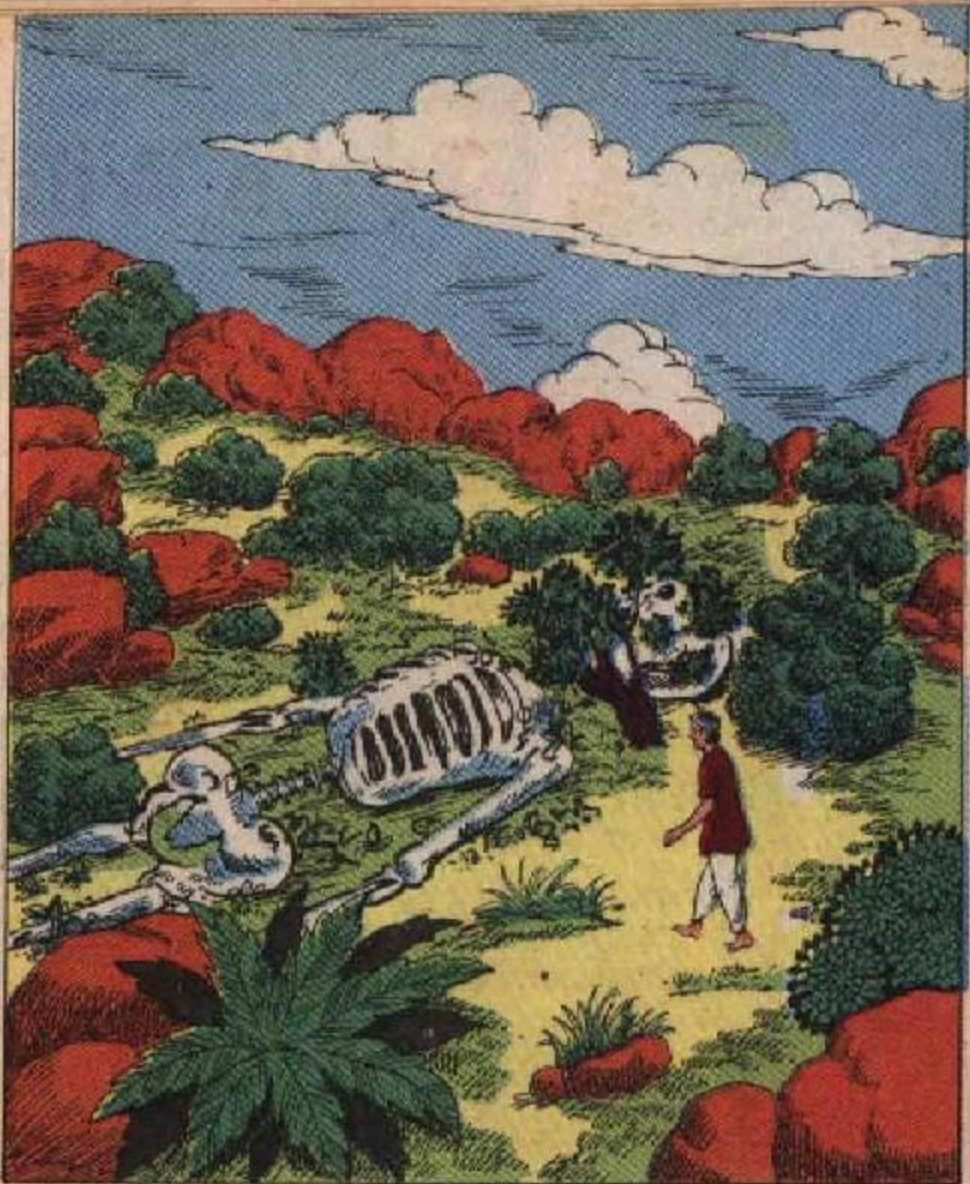
The man nodded his head as if he had understood the conditions on which he was being sent to the island. At the same time he silently prayed to god that he be saved from the demon on the island. The ship touched the

island earlier than was expected. The captain lowered the rope ladder for the man to land on the beach. The soldiers threw the sacks containing foodstuff for the man on to the shore. The ship returned, leaving the man alone on the island.

In fact, he never thought that the king would be so unkind to him, while he was willing to extend all comforts and care to his family. It was almost like throwing him into the jaws of the demon. He could not reconcile the fate he was facing and the safety his family had been assured. Anyway he decided not to fight against his fate.

A few hours of solitary existence on the island made him cry aloud. 'Oh God ! Have I come to this pass? Do you want me to lead a lonely life on this deserted island for six months? No, I don't think I wish to lead such a life. I'd better die. O God Almighty, please take away my life! I don't want to suffer death minute by minute. Take me away before the demon finds me out!'

The man, at the same time, also tried to reconcile himself with his fate. In the beginning he did not feel hunger or thirst. 'Why should I eat? Why should I drink? Anyway I'm going to die! That was his thought. He lay down on the ground, and soon fell asleep as he was feeling very tired. When he woke up, the sun was already up on the horizon, shedding light on him and the surroundings. He

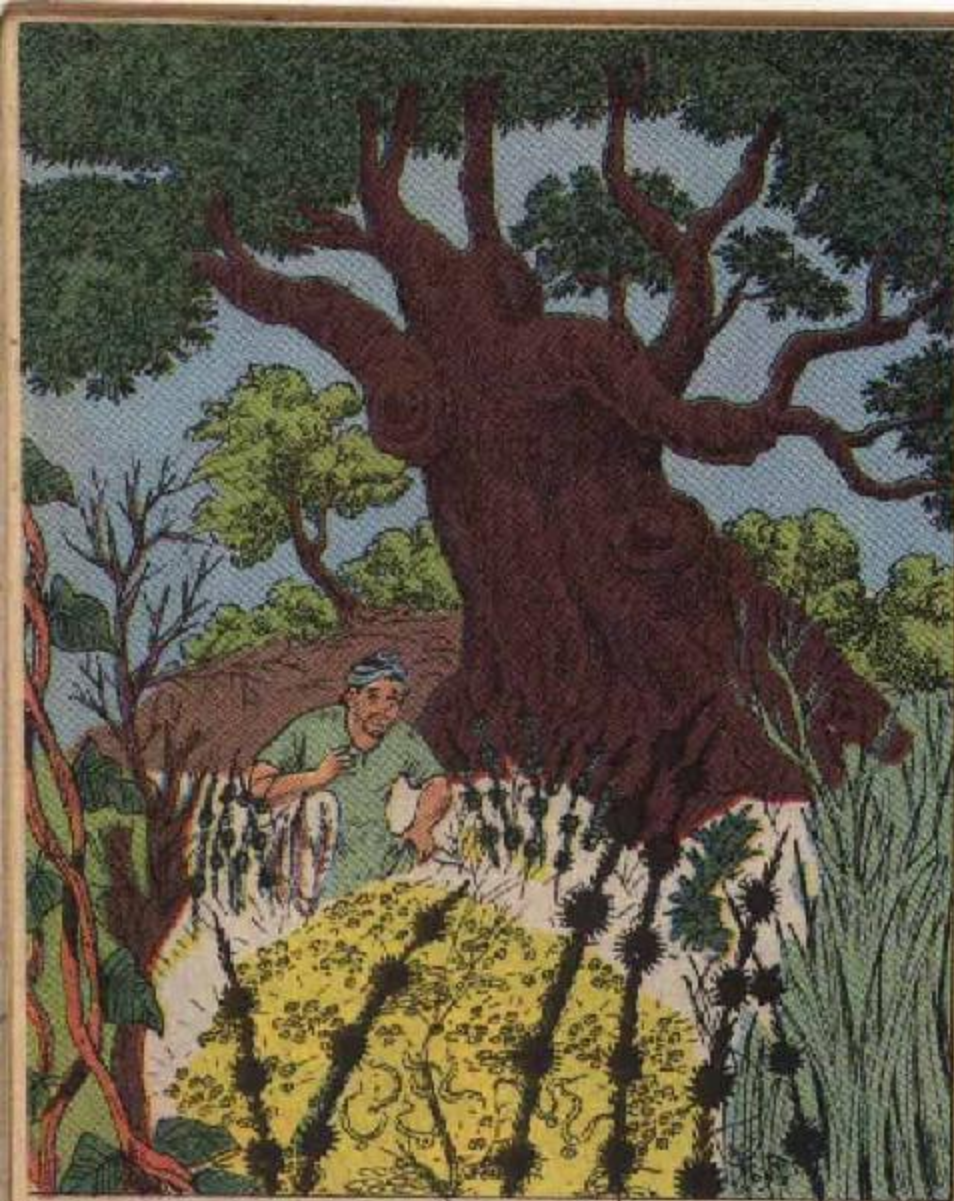


looked around. And then he looked at himself. He moved his legs and hands. So, he was not dead! The demon had not made a meal of him !

He did not shift from where he was sitting. Now he was hungry. He opened one of the sacks and ate whatever he could pull out from the sack. Though he expected the demon any moment, he did not wait for him. Thus three days went by. There was no sign of the demon. He assumed some courage and began to stray into the surroundings, though with some caution. He could not see any demon anywhere. He saw a corner with a lot of flowers and fruit-bearing trees. He decided to spend some days there.

As days went by, he felt more and





more daring to venture out deeper into the island. One day, he came upon a huge skeleton, presumably of a giant. It was long and broad. The chest ribs were like a big room. He remembered that ships passing by the island had reported of only one demon, who used to catch hold of the ships and swallow the people on board and eat the foodstuffs the vessels carried. When ships avoided going anywhere near the island, the source of his food was denied to the demon and he must have naturally died of hunger, thought the poor man. The body must have been reduced to a skeleton.

The man now had greater faith in his fate. Look at that ! That he should reach the island only after the demon

had been removed from the scene. The power that took away the demon's life must be the same which helped him survive on the island. He praised the unknown power, or whoever possessed it.

He was now sure that he need not go about with any lurking fear of a demon. From then on, he went deeper and deeper into the island. One day, his eyes were blinded with the sight of a heap of gold ornaments and precious stones. They must have been the booty plundered from the passing ships. He felt pity for the passengers who at one time were the owners of these items. How much tears they must have shed when they were robbed of their possessions ! The man wondered whether it was also the decision of god to take him to the plunder and suggest that he should enjoy it.

He went back to where he had left the sacks that contained the food meant for him. He brought the empty sacks and began filling them with the treasure. It was all collected by a demon, now to be enjoyed by a poor man like him. Surely there must be a divine hand behind all this adventure!

As he was filling the sacks, he was injured on the hand by the sharp edges on some of the jewellery. He was not worried. He tied the sacks and looked around when he espied a leather bag some distance away. He picked it up



and opened it only to see a fairly large size diamond. As he held it on his hand, lo ! and behold, the wounds stopped oozing blood and they healed automatically. That meant, the diamond had some healing power.

The man was now full of surprises and wonders. He attributed the gift of the diamond also to god almighty. He praised the lord. He hung the leather bag from his shoulder and dragged the sacks to the shore.

He now had an urge to escape from the island. How would he do that? A ship must come that way and he must succeed in attracting its attention. He must then go on board with his treasure. But for all that, he must depend on God, only on God.

He knew an escape would not be that easy, because no ship dared to go anywhere near the island for fear of the demon. He alone knew that the demon was no more. How would the ships know that they could now safely approach the island?

It was again god's will, what else? As he waited on the shore, he saw a ship sailing by at a distance. He took off his turban and began waving with it. Some of the passengers saw the man and went and told the ship's captain. He drew the ship near the shore and managed to take on board the man and the two sacks.

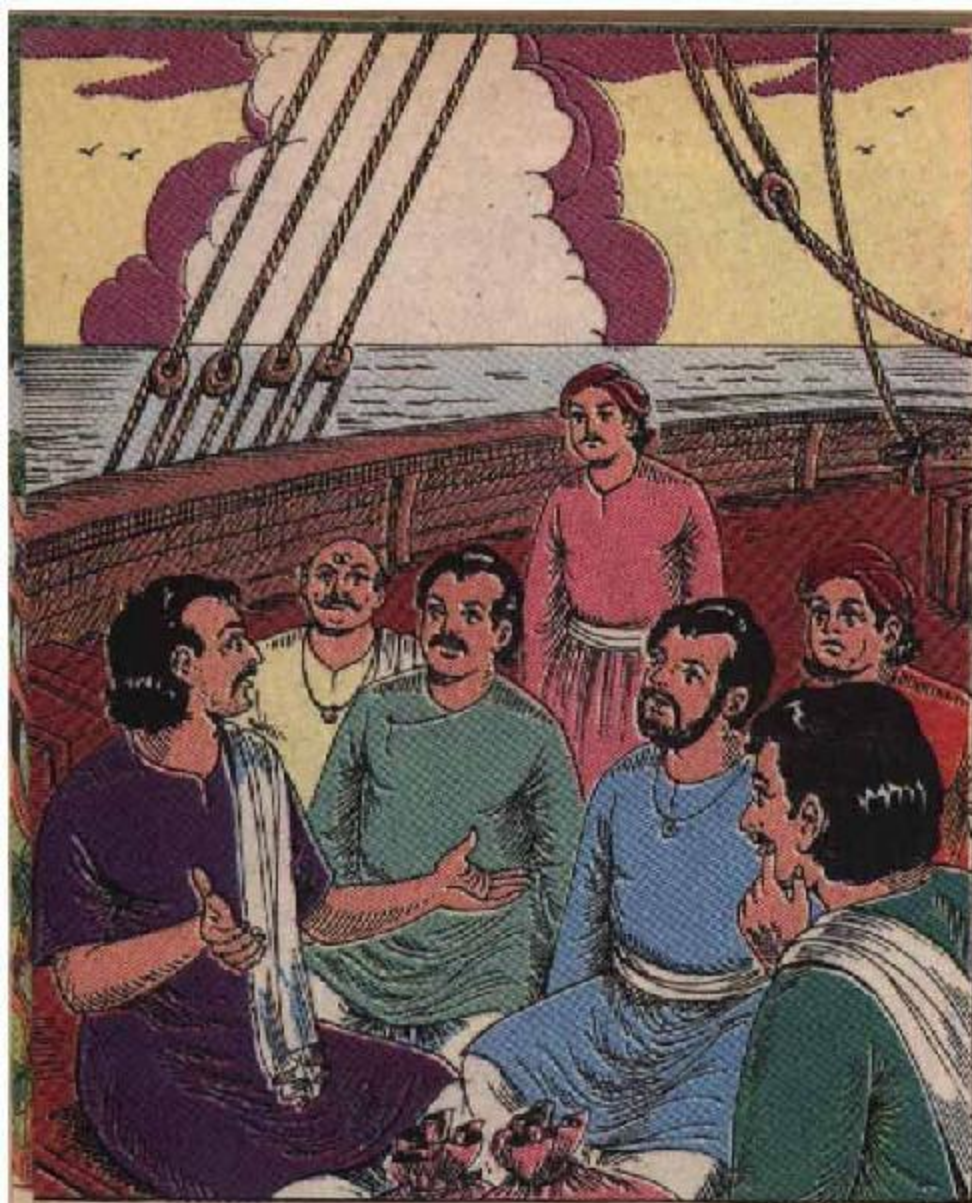
The passengers were shouting to the captain to move away fast lest they were caught by the demon. When



they were certain that the ship was now at a safe distance, they crowded around the new passenger and bombarded him with questions : "What's your name?" "Where are you from?" "How did you manage to reach the Rakshas Island?" "Didn't you meet the demon?" etc, etc.

"Be patient, I shall tell you everything !" he pacified them. After settling down, he began his story. "I'm a trader. I very much wanted to travel by ship and go to other countries to carry on trade with the people there. I started along with some other traders. Suddenly I realised that I didn't carry enough money. So I wanted to borrow some money from one of my fellow-traders. He said he would give





me a thousand coins if I alighted at Rakshas Dweep and spent a whole week all by myself. I agreed. The ship left me here with some foodstuff for me. My name is Sivadas. I am from Sivapuri. I managed to keep myself alive, because I was eager to get that thousand coins. One week passed. Today it is the tenth day. There was no trace of the ship or my friend. Fortunately, your ship came this way. All god's will !"

The poor man did not reveal the truth. If he had done so, he would have been in trouble, because they would take away his treasure and they might even do away with him. Right now, his only desire was to return home with his treasure. There

was no harm in not telling the entire truth.

"But that was Rakshas Dweep!" One passenger was curious. "How did you manage to remain alive? Didn't you see the demon? How did you escape from him?"

"Please, please, don't ask me any of those questions," Sivadas pleaded. "I did not stir out from the place I landed. And till I boarded this ship, I did not see the demon. Please don't refer to the demon. I am afraid of him!"

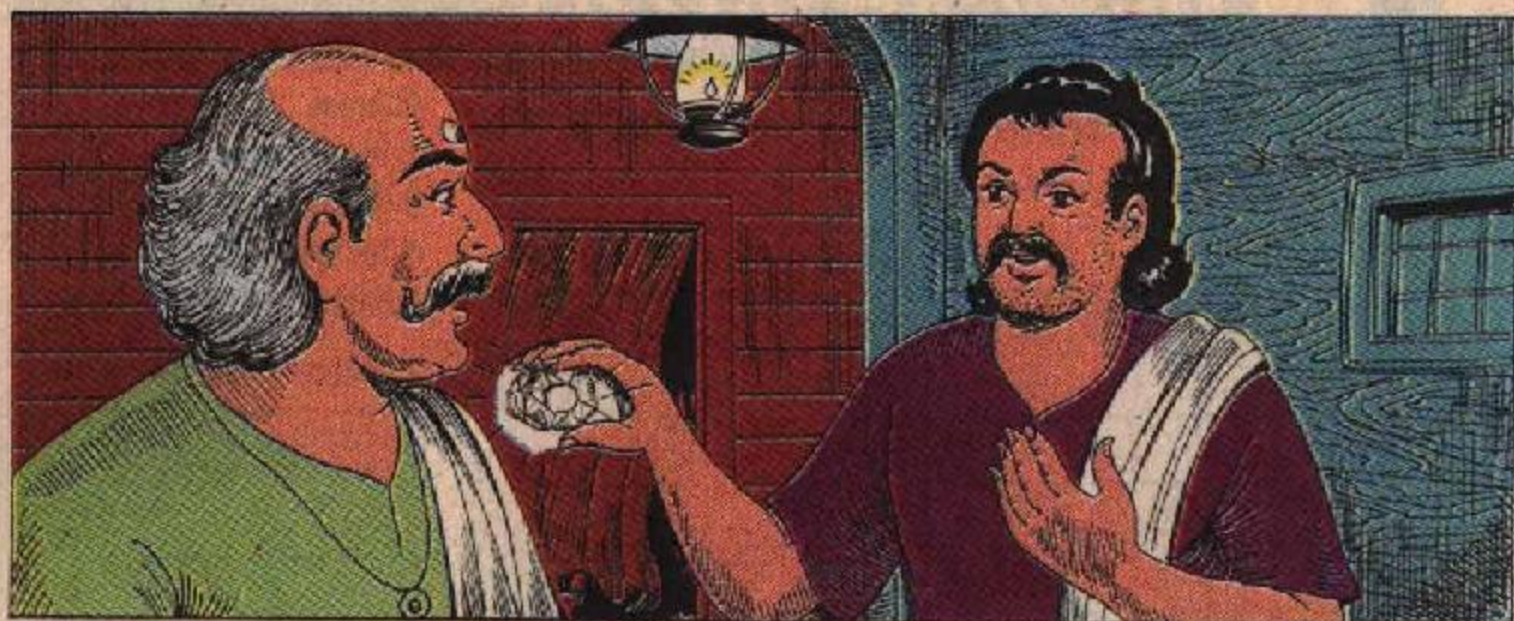
He thought the passengers were satisfied with his replies. So, he ventured to ask them, "Tell me, where are you all from?"

"Oh, we're all from Mangalpuri next to your Sivapuri. The ship belongs to the traders of Mangalpuri. We're on our way to Simhapuri. We'll get down at all the places we touch to carry on trade."

Sivadas managed to move closer with one of the traders, named Manmohan, and engaged him in long conversation so that he could learn some trade tricks. After all, if he were to get some knack of things, he would be able to carry on trade with the help of the treasure he possessed.

A few days later, the ship anchored at Nariel Dweep. The place was known for its abundance of coconut-fresh and dry. Manmohan advised him: "Sivadas, you buy coconuts and copra and take them to Simhapuri





where there's a great demand for both items."

Both of them got down at Nariel Dweep and wandered in the market. As they were walking, Manmohan hit a stone and stumbled down. He was injured all over the body. Sivadas helped him to walk back to the ship and board it. Later, Sivadas found Manmohan writhing in pain. "I can't withstand the sight of your suffering!" He took out the mysterious diamond and held it against the wounds on Manmohan's body. In no time, the wounds closed, and there was no trace of any blood. He did not have any pain either.

"How wonderful, Sivadas!" Manmohan praised him. "Are you really a trader? I've my doubt!"

"I was expecting such a query from you," said Sivadas. "That's why I came to you when nobody else was around.

Today I'm a trader. Don't ask me what I was till I came on board your ship. I'm obliged to certain people who have been responsible for my present status. I've to disclose certain things to them. Only then can I reveal anything to others. You're much older and senior to me. Also more experienced. I'm just starting business, so I need your blessings. I believe in god and his unseen powers, which decide one's fate. It's my belief in fate that has withstood me all along in my life. More than this I can't tell you. And whatever I've told you, please keep it to yourself. Others need not know now."

Manmohan was surprised at whatever Sivadas had told him. He blessed him with all sincerity and affection for an up-and-coming trader.

(To continue)

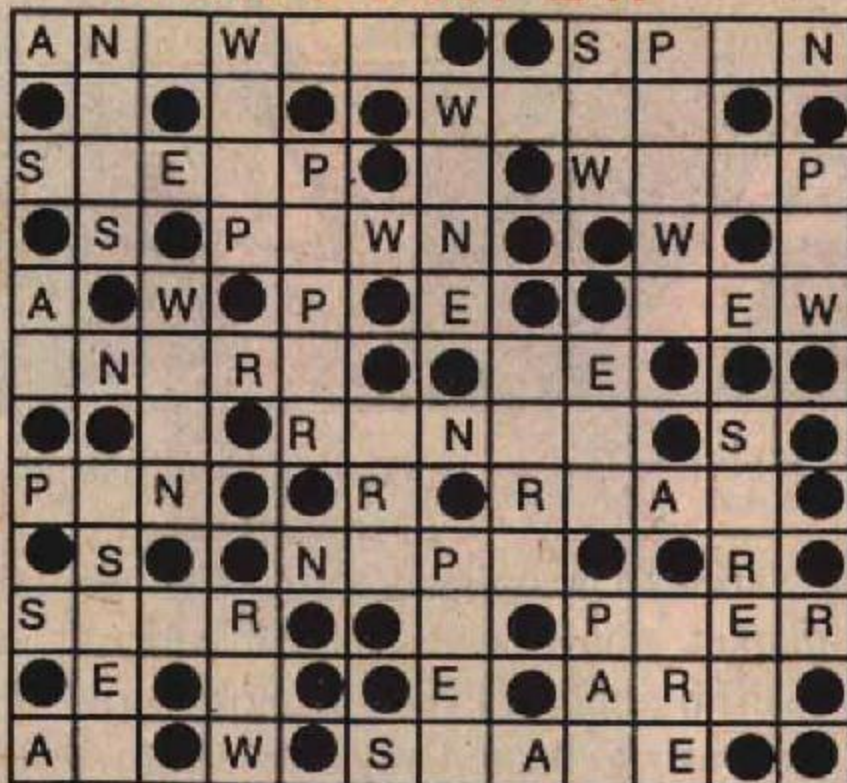
● A learned man is a tank; a wise man is a spring.

— Alger

A MERICAN PUZZLE

-P.S. Kumar

Find 36 words from the single word
'NEWSPAPER'



Clues

2 letter words - 3

3 letter words - 10

4 letter words - 14

5 letter words - 8

6 letter words - 1

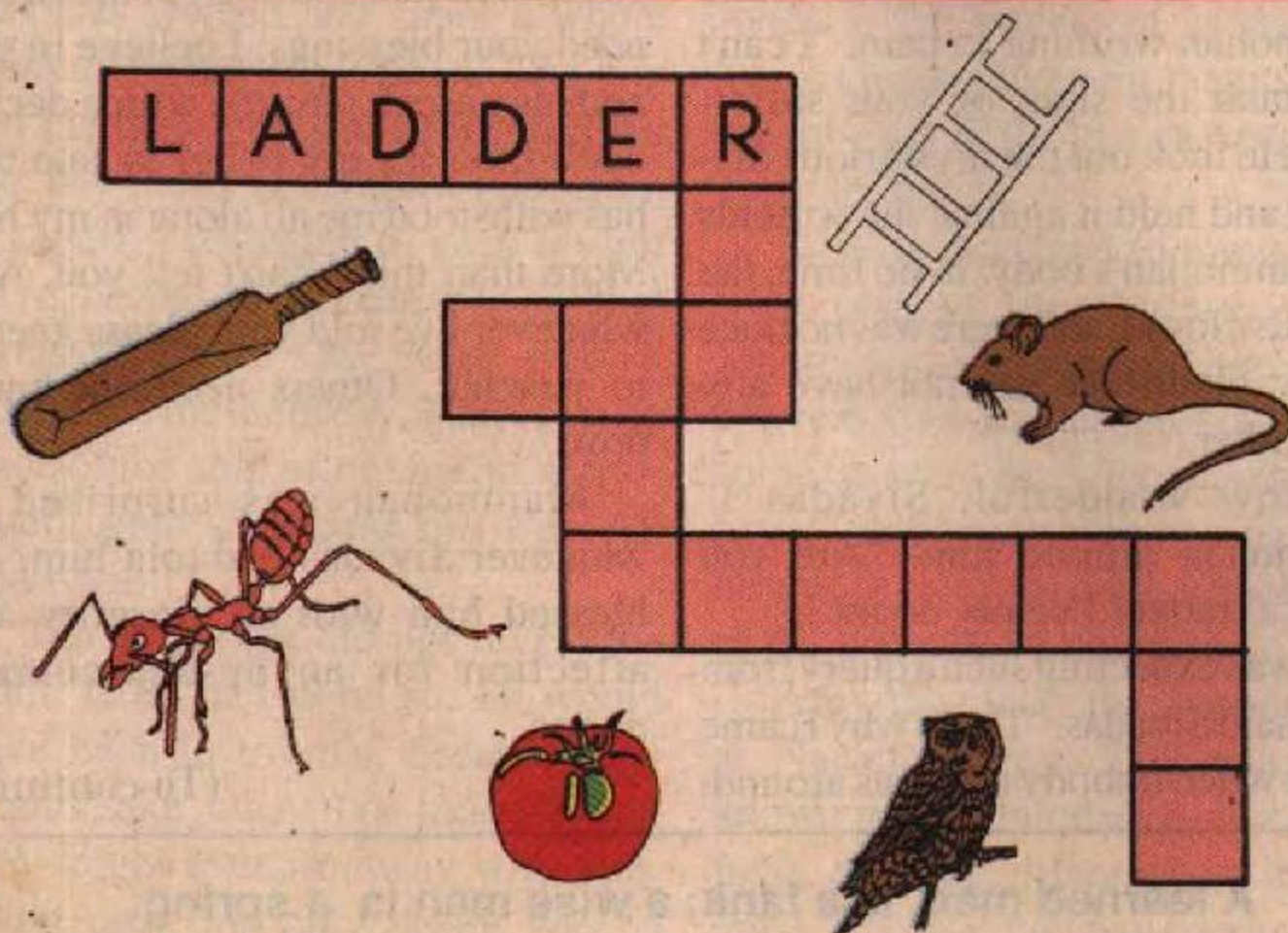
Total words 36

Last month Solution



CROSS WORD

-P. Ramu



Using the picture clues make connecting words



Choice of Prescription



Sreedhar Patel was a rich man; he was also a learned person. He spent money carefully, after weighing all pros and cons. He would try to avoid an expenditure if he could help it. However, he was not miserly in exhibiting his erudition. He was vain-glorious.

Once he suffered from an eye trouble. The eyes became reddish and there was constant watering. He suffered much from this ailment. There was only one doctor in that place. Baidyanath was a capable doctor. One look at the eyes, and he would prescribe the medicines which would be very effective, too. He became popular with patients and they worshipped him as if he were a divine person.

This doctor followed certain principles. If his patients were poor, he

would not demand any fee but accepted whatever they gave him. That did not mean that the medicines, he prescribed for them were sub-standard. He would even call on them, if he were to be told that they could not walk up to his clinic.

Baidyanath would prescribe an elaborate treatment if he found that his patient was rich and could afford it. Only by that way could he earn some money. Patel had an occasion earlier to consult him when he had to spend almost a hundred rupees per day for the treatment. So, this time he was reluctant to go to the doctor, but it was a case of eyes, and so he decided to consult him. But he thought of a strategy to spend less money. He put on a torn shirt, wore a spoiled dhoti, and wrapped himself in a saf-



from shawl to make him look like a mendicant. He carried a four-anna (quarter rupee) coin on a betel leaf to be given as fees.

When he reached the clinic, he posed as if he was dead tired. He placed the betel leaf with the four annas on it in front of Baidyanath and said: "Doctor, my eyes are troubling me. Please give me medicines."

Patel was confident that he would be able to get away with one or two medicines and without having to spend more than four annas. Baidyanath examined the eyes and said: "Cut radish into pieces, and sprinkle with salt. The water you get should be mixed with asafoetida. You must drink this water for forty days. Also eat the radish pieces. Your eyes will get all right."

Sreedhar Patel came back home

and started the treatment. In forty days he was cured of his eye trouble. However, now he developed stomach trouble. He did not want to take one look at radish! He had to go back to Baidyanath. Again wearing rags and carrying a four anna coin on a betel leaf.

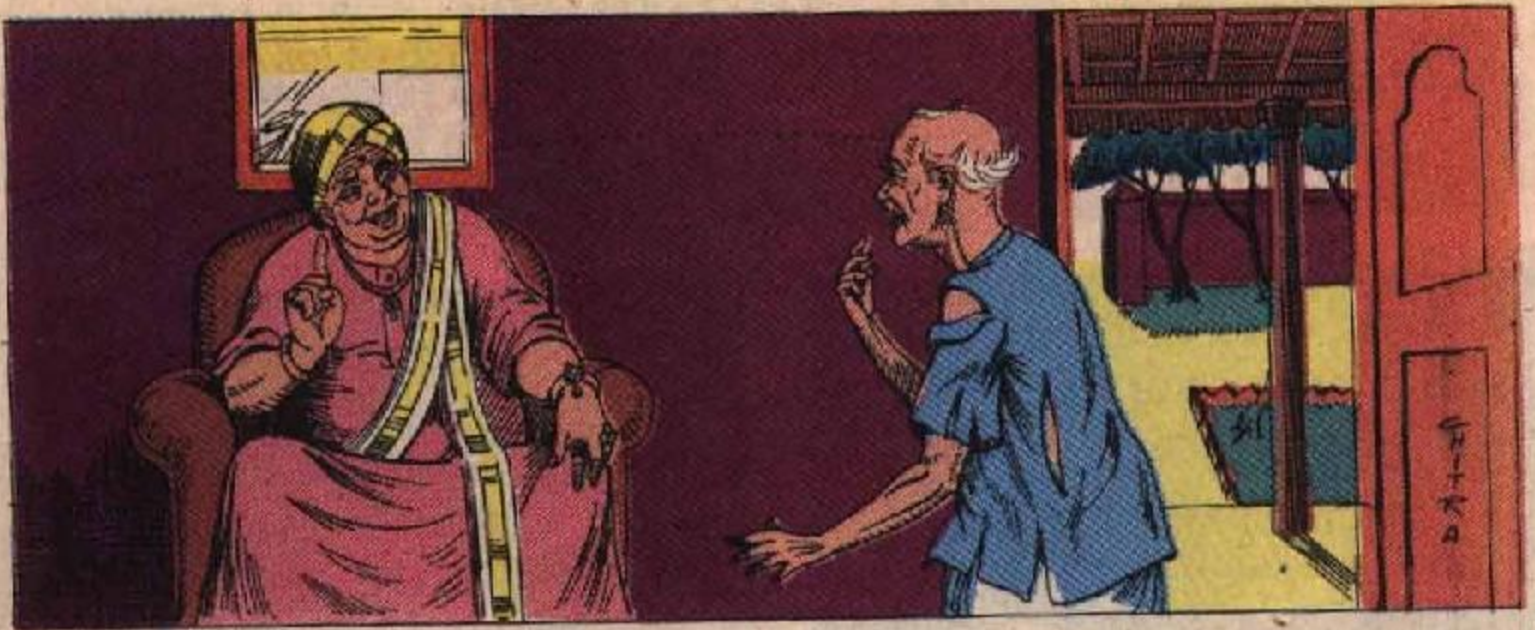
Patel was by then craving for tasty food. He wailed: "Doctor, my eye trouble has vanished. Now I'm suffering from stomach-ache. Please give me some medicine!"

Baidyanath examined his pulse. "Tell me, what did you eat? You've indigestion."

"I was so fed up with radish that I wanted to eat something that would give me some taste and appetite. I ate two laddus."

"Laddus? Were they prepared in pure ghee? Where did you buy them





from?" queried Baidyanath.

"Doctor, give me some medicines first. I shall tell you all that later!" Patel pleaded.

"Your appear to be poor. The one who sold laddus to you must have given you cheap stuff and he must have made lots of money like that. Go and get enough money from him for your treatment!"

"But, doctor, is it fair to take money from him for my treatment?" said Patel.

"All that I don't know. It's his laddus that has given you stomach-ache. If you don't want to ask him, I shall come to your place and ask

him." Baidyanath then gave him a tablet which he swallowed and felt greatly relieved. On the way home, he rested beneath a tree.

Baidyanath, in the mean time, reached Patel's residence and was told that he had not returned home. So, he waited. When Patel saw Baidyanath at his residence, he got the shock of his life, and fell down on the floor.

Baidyanath now knew that Patel was trying to cheat him. He asked for five hundred rupees and gave him a prescription for several medicines to cure his stomach-ache. "They're costly medicines meant for rich people," he remarked as he left Patel's house.

● The more a man denies himself, the more he shall obtain from God.

— Horace

● Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.

— Gray

● Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

— Alexander Pope

● The path of truth is as narrow as it is straight.

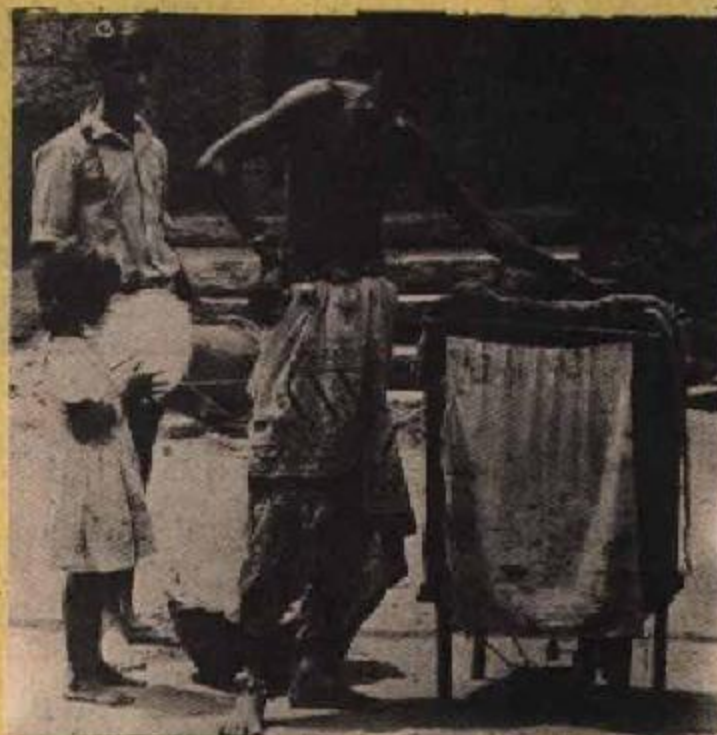
— Mahatma Gandhi



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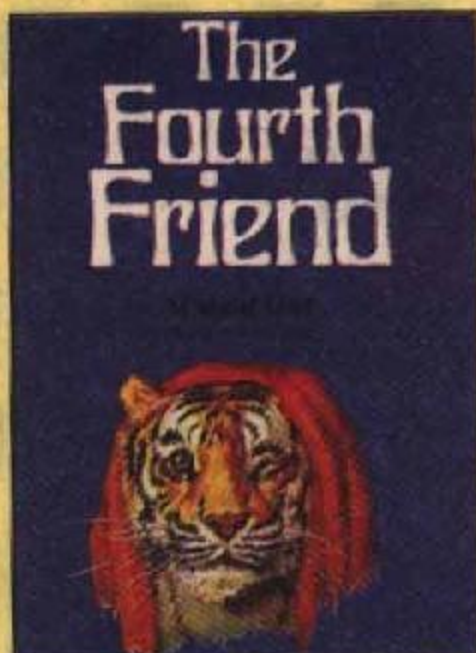
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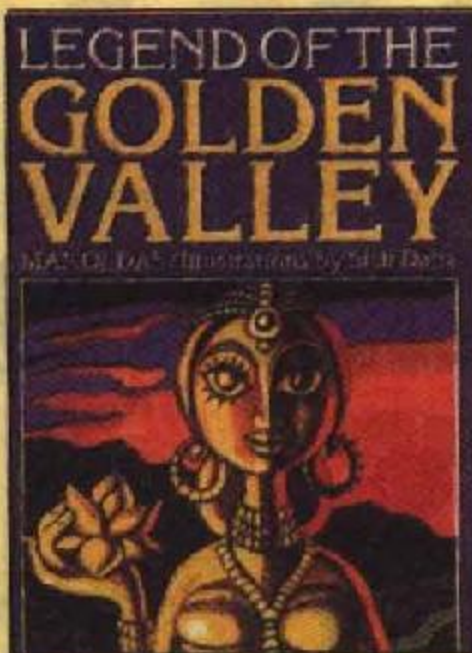
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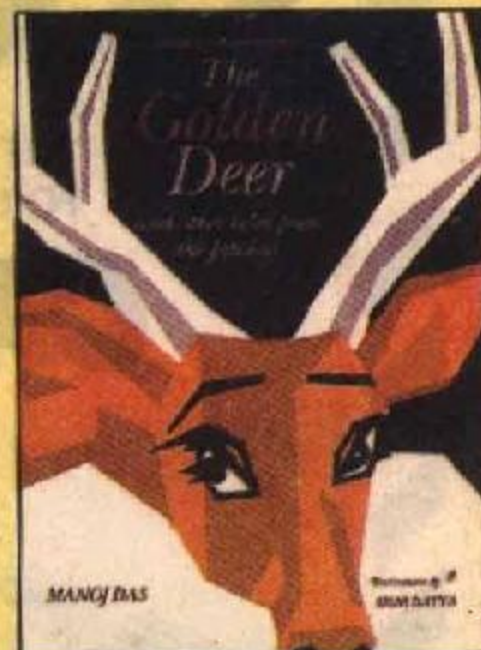
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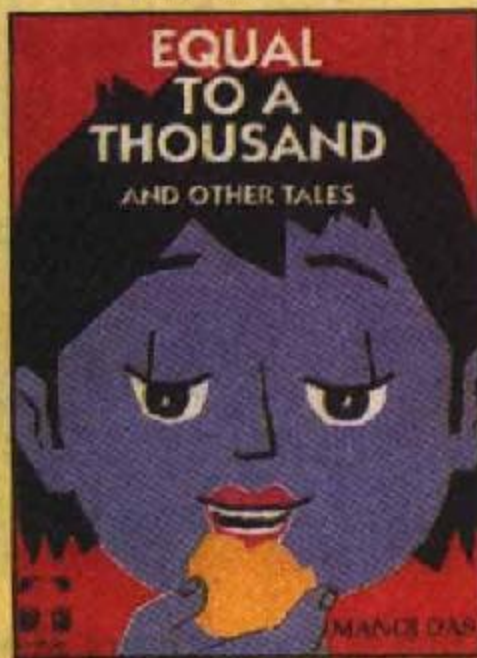
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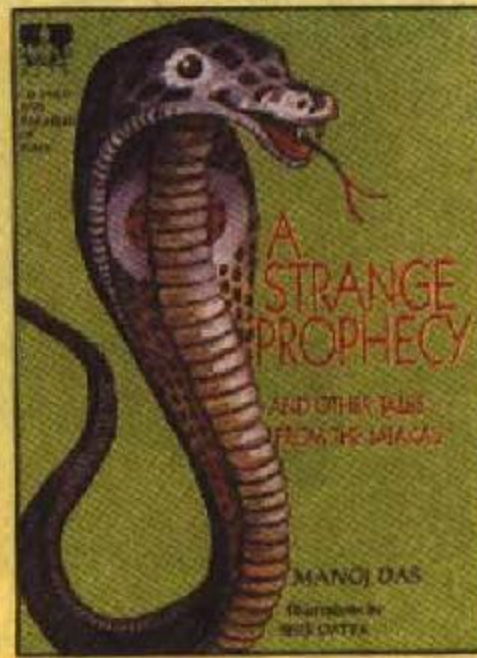
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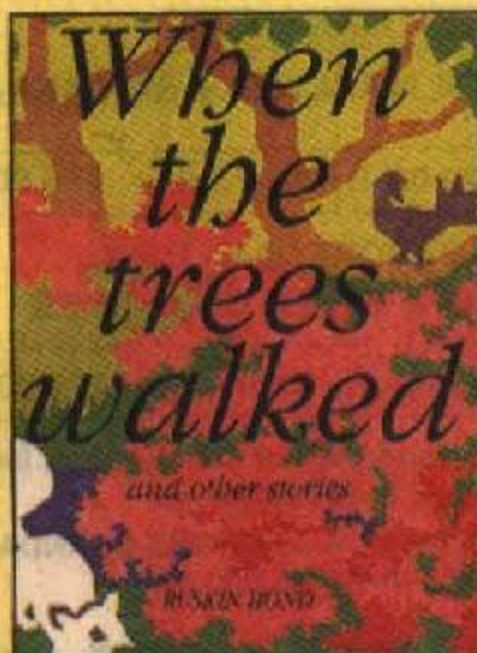
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